

The QUIVER

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PEACEFUL WAS THE NIGHT

By

GRACE MARGARET GALLAHER

The little Jesus came to town,
With ox and ass He laid Him down,
Peace to the byre, peace to the fold,
For that they housed Him from the cold.

THE old grey church crowns a hill road that curves and curtseys up out of the valley where the little forgotten village bustles about its tiny occasions. Within, it is a bare place, for this is a poor parish. This winter night, however, lights glowed in the windows and lively voices flung echoes against the frosty hills. This was Christmas Eve, and the folk of the parish were trimming the church for early service to-morrow.

A young fellow ran out into the yard. "Yere's a wonderful sprangle of mistletoe, Pol'y," he shouted. "Want it?"

"Deddy I don't." The voices sounded all over the hill in the utter stillness of the night. "Mistletoe's a heathen an' evah t evah come to church. Yo' get me a right smart mo' holly branches."

The man disappeared into the forest. Presently the girl's voice reached him:

"Hurry up! Joel says he bliged to shut up church an' go home."

"What's he gwine home so early to, Christmas Eve?"

"It ain't early. It's half past ten," the gal told him reasonably.

"I got to be back yere at one o'clock an'

'goin at three, to watch out fo' the fahs." The old sexton himself came into view.

"All righty. Just stick these in that bare space by the pulpit, will yo'?" The young fellow thrust the branches into the old arms. "Listen, Polly. Let's yo' an' me ride ovah to give Merry Christmas to Betsy an' George."

"Let's." The girl began to pull on her coat. "Mothah, Bob an' I are gwine ovah to Greenaway, to say Merry Christmas to 'em there. You an' dad come, too?"

A little woman now joined the group.

"Right cold ride ovah that hill," she answered. "Dad an' me well stop to help sistah fill the babies' stockings. Polly," for the girl was already by her horse, "I'm a gwine to put the key of the house right vere—inside the do' in this crack—so whoever comes by first will find it an' open up. Then none of us won't have to shiver on the do' step."

"All right," the girl called back, as her horse began to trot. "Tell Joel just to shut the church do', not lock it."

The workers came out of the church and separated down the road and over the bluff, some on horseback, some in ancient carriages, some on foot. Last of all the sexton put out all lights but one above the altar, closed the door, and plodded down to his house in the hollow.

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The night was cold and still and beautiful. An icing of snow covered the ground, over which the slim young moon cast a veil that glimmered milky white.



All the time the directions and explanations, good-byes and Christmas greetings were being called back and forth from the church, a man had been hidden deep in behind the trees close to the road. He listened with tense care. Then, as two of the workers entered the forest by a trail, he vanished farther into its dimness. Cautious, furtive, he avoided each brittle twig or rolling stone, with a woodman's craft. Long after the pair had disappeared and even their voices had faded out, he lurked in the depths. At last, with the same stealth, he crept back into the road and the open moon trail.

He wore a heavy coat, but no hat, and the moon shone on thick, curly hair. The moon showed him, too, tall, strong, lithe, with the sure swiftness of youth in his motions. He stood as still as a stone, listening; then cast a steady, searching look into every corner of the wood and the churchyard. Satisfied, he stepped to the low wall, swung over it noiselessly, and made for the church door.

He lifted the worn latch, pushed open the door a crack, and bent down over the sill. The church had no vestibule or entrance hall, the door opening directly into the main room. He felt along the floor till his fingers found a groove in the brick masonry and touched a cold, metallic something. With a snap they drew out a house-door key.

The door sighed and groaned as if in reproof, and swung wide away from him open against the wall. Conscious now of a faint light in the church and the warmth of fire, still on his knees, he looked before him; then rose as if drawn up by hands, and stood, fixed, stricken into motionlessness.

A stove on each side of the door threw out into the twilight a glow that mingled with the shadows into a red dusk like the atmosphere of a dream, but over the altar a lamp burned with a small, clear light. Kneeling before the altar, but fronting him, was a woman, a baby in her arms. She was clothed in ardent blue, with something white over her shoulders, and her hair, dark and fine and loose, clouded around her. Her

face was young and lovely, with a still, white beauty; in her eyes was awe and a forward-looking sorrow. One arm cradled the baby, the other reached a hand back to touch the altar. From the head of the sleeping baby rayed out a soft blur of light. Between the man and the altar the air seemed liquid, so that the mother and child floated before him.

He knew them instantly; they had hung in a babyhood picture above his bed—she in her blue dress, the pain of all the world in her young face, He in His happy innocence. Why was it given to him to see them in this lonely church this winter night?

He grew aware of the garlands of pine twining the pillars, of the holly berries, of the great star behind the altar, of the words in white letters against green: "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men," Christmas Eve! A vision sent to him! The key in his clutching fingers cut them. To him, a thief! A hot rush choked his throat—a hot mist burned his eyes. Old words, heard long ago, whirred in his brain: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man."

And still the vision did not fade, remained motionless before his eyes—the Mother Mary, the Christ Child—and still he could not speak. Only his foot felt for the crack in the bricks, and his hand dropped the key back into it.



The church workers had barely gone, their voices still sounding happily on the air, the old sexton was just vanishing into the hollow, when up the road came a woman with a swinging step that marked her as country raised. A bag was slung over her shoulders, a large bundle filled her arms. She pushed open the gate of the churchyard silently and, velvet footed, followed the path around the church to the sacristy.

Freeing one arm from her bundle, she prised open the loose-boned window, reached in, and pulled back the bolt of the door, all with the deftness of old habit. She groped along the black little room through the door into the chancel and sank, her breath fluttering on her lips, into a choir stall. There she threw off her coat and hat, shook her hair loose about her shoulders, and closed her eyes wearily. In the light of the altar lamp, she was a slender figure

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of a girl, white, thin-tired; yet in her eyes shone a kind of dancing light of adventure, of gallant endeavour. The bundle across her knees stirred and gave out piping sounds. The girl smiled—and her smile was very sweet—drew off the wrappings from the bundle, and held against her cheek a downy-headed, sleep-flushed baby.

"Hushie—hushie!" she crooned to the pink cheeks and yellow fluff.

The piping rose to a cry. The girl pulled out of her bag a bottle filled with milk, ran down the choir steps to one of the big stoves that stood at the end of the room, and thrust the bottle into the hot ashes in the pan beneath the fire-box. While the milk heated, she swayed up and down the brick aisle, cradling the baby and singing in a murmur an old, wandering air, the refrain of which was :

The little Lord Jesus,
No crying made He.

Presently she was seated in one of the pews near the fire, and the baby was gurgling down the hot milk. The milk drained, the baby sank into sleep again, deeper and deeper.

The girl watched it, smoothing its dress with her fingers and wrapping it closer in a fine white shawl. Her face was still and sad, and all the shine of romance was dimmed in tears. Yet her small, square chin did not quiver, the soft fold of her lips did not break. She kissed the baby's hands, and, raising him up in her arms, stepped out of the pew.

Up the aisle, through the chancel, past the choir, to the altar itself she went, and at the altar knelt down. She made a nest



"Here's a wonderful sprangle of
mistletoe, Polly. Want it?" —p. 97.

Drawn by
Harold Copping

of the warm cloak in which the baby had been wrapped, tenderly laid the little creature in it, drew from her breast a letter in an envelope with a name written on it, and pinned that to the little skirt. Over the altar gleamed a great white Christmas star of everlastings, but behind it, hidden by the garlands of green and red and white, hung the sorrowful Christ. With closed eyes her groping hands found this, touched it, and clung fast, her lips moving in a prayer that, like her hands, groped in blackness to find the Son of God.

In the dim, still church something sounded

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—a step, the creak of the door, and then its heavy swing open. She caught the baby up into her arms, turned on her knees, one hand steadyng her body by the altar, and faced whatever might be.

From the open doors of the stoves steamed out a clouded, rosy light. Through this haze she could see a strip of far-off sky set with one blazing star. In the door itself stood—man or God? She could not tell. Someone tall and strong and beautiful, with golden hair, aureole-like around the forehead, and eyes blue and deep and shining. The hands were clasped tog'ther; the face was transfigured like that of one who sees things not to be told. Surely this was the very One for whom the wreaths were trimmed, the holly decked out, the church lighted, the carols sung—Christ, Son of Mary and Son of God. She held her baby towards Him that He might bless it.



They looked and looked at each other in a trance of unreality, the man who was a thief and the girl with the forsaken baby. She spoke at last, slowly, but clearly, for she had no fear.

"What yo' want yere?" Her voice was soft, slurring all the hard sounds, and 'the cadence of her speec' was one the man had heard in his cradle.

"What yo' want yere?"

He, too, had the mellow drawl of all the men of her familiarity.

She came up from her knees and went down the aisle towards him. He met her half-way.

"Are yo' hungry?" She studied the thin pallor of his face. He looked as she often felt.

"Deed I am!" He smiled at her and all his beauty glowed.

"Come in yere."

Her hand motioned him to the warm pew by the stove where she had sat. S. d'ew out of her bag bread, meat, and more milk.

"Yo' eat, too."

"I wouldn't wish to, thank yo'. I had mah suppah back to the tavern."

She watched him eat quickly and hungrily, yet not wolfishly; and while she watched she tore the letter into pieces and scattered them on the floor.

"Mah gracious! That's good. I ain't eat to-day."

He was tall, powerful, and beautiful, as she had seen him in her vision, but, near, he showed tired and haggard lines his youth should not have borne.

"I reckoned yo' was—— Standin' yere in the do', yo' seemed like yo' was a kind o' vision," the girl told him confusedly.

"I took yo' fo' Mary, the Virgin, an' that there fo' her Little Son." He smoothed the baby's dress reverently.

Neither spoke for a time, still in the spell of their awe. Then he said gently:

"I reckon I have saw yo' befo' in these pahts?"

"I was bawn an' raised right yere, oval to Sunny Slope Fahm."

"Then yo're Hector McKimmon's girl——" He stopped in confusion and patted the baby again.

"I'm Hallie McKimmon, that ran away to town to sing," she finished quietly. "Yo' face is right friendly, too. Seems like I ought to know yo'."

"I was bawn an' raised right yere, mahself. Mah fathah owned Gray Ledges."

"Then yo're Houston Doyne, that——" She, too, caught herself up.

"Run off to town to get away from mah stepfathah. I reckon there's a pair o' us drawn in this deal."

He laughed under his breath, because of the baby.

She slid out a hand to him, and he took it in his gently.

"Mighty little trick yo' was to run away from home," he ventured.

She drew away her hand, first pressing his in a light, quick touch.

"Mah fathah's a right ha'sh man. He didn't feel to let me have nary variety, an' he wouldn't let me sing exceptin' just in church. I got a right pow'ful voice"—she dropped her eyes till the lashes lay on her cheeks—"an' folks always praised it, too. I honed to sing befo' folks in big halls an' theaters an' like that. I ran away to town."

"Did you sing there?"

"Deed I did, an' I got a heap o' money, till baby came an' I couldn't sing any mo'."

"How ol' is it?"

"Seven months. Ain't he a great big boy? He's had all he wanted—always. I got afear'd to him in town. That's why I brought him out yere."



"'I'm Hallie McKimmon, that
fan away to town to sing.'"

Drawn by
Harold Copper

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The man turned away his eyes that they might not ask questions against his will.

The girl looked straight at the light above the altar, and spoke softly, without emphasis, as if she were summing up for herself alone her life. The back of the church was twilight dim, the surroundings that make confidences flow.

"He's been daid 'most a year." The man guessed of whom she spoke. "I reckoned I was his wife same as if we'd been wedded in church, but he—" Bitter tragedy swept her face, then passed into patience. "He's daid. I 'low I was a mighty trillin', ignorant girl. I didn't look out fo' myself like I ought." Something in the man's face caused her to shift responsibility in part to her own shoulders, lest he forget he accused one now gone to other judgments.

"Warn't it dreadful strugglin' wo'k fendin' fo' yo'self an' the baby?"

She flashed him a look haunted by days of toil and nights of terror.

"What did yo' do?"

"Sang."

"Where?"

"Every place." Again that look. "But mah voice is mighty weak still. I cayn't make it through in town."

"So yo've come home?"

Her eyes denied this with mournful insistence.

"Ain't yo' gwine home to Hector McKimmon?"

"I wrote mah fathah when—he—died, tellin' him how I was done with foolishness, an' I begged him to fo'give me an' let me come home to be his girl again."

"What he say?"

"I ain't got any daughter. Yo' ain't got any fathah nor mothah nor home, Nary word mo'."

"Yo', his *onlyest* child!"

"I'm a-gwine West," the girl went on. "Folks say it's easier fo' a girl—like me—out there. But I daren't to take baby—the journeyin' an' the wildness an' maybe the hungrieness of it. I came on the train home, an' I was gwine to Tobin's, but there ain't a stop there like there used to be, so I had to get off at St. George's. It's a pow'ful long walk, an' baby's a load to tote. It took me mo' time than I'd counted on, I'd studied it out how I'd get home 'bout eight o'clock an' lay baby on the kitchen

do'step, with a little letter to fathah pinned to him. Fathah always goes round outside to see if things are like they ought to be fo' night. When he found baby an' saw how sweet he is an' heard how I was a-gwine away fo'evah, he couldn't be hahd to him, could he?"

"No!" cried the man to the appeal in her eyes.

"When I was too wore out to go on, I minded me of the church, an' how it was Christmas Eve an' 'twould be warm an' safe, an' how mah own old ministah would find him in the mawnin' early an' take him to fathah."

"You'll leave him yere?"

She took the hand of the sleeping baby in hers, pressing it very softly.

"Not now. I looked up an' I thought it was a—a—vision. 'Tain't nary use to tell me 'twas just yo' in the do'. I saw—fo' a moment—how it was Christmas Eve, an' Mary didn't have nary place to lay her Son, an' how folks were against her, maybe, an' how she brought Him up to be—to be—like Him in the do'. I'm a-gwine to take mah baby with me wherevah I go. Well live or die together." Suddenly her eyes burned with their old clear, high adventure. "An' I got a feelin' right in mah heart it will be live!"

"That's yo'!" His voice caught her courage. On that note he dashed into his own story.

"Sistah, I ran away from home, too. Mah trouble was a stepfathah. I reckon yo' all have heard tell o' Elizabeth Doyne's marriage to a feller half her years, that got hold o' her falm an' her purse an' all she had?"

The girl nodded.

"I lit out. I wasn't but seventeen, but I could do a man's work all right." He flexed his great arm muscles over his head; he was a young godling for beauty and strength. "I was mighty foolish an' trillin' careenin' round town an' spendin' mah money free fo' all, but I didn't hahm nary soul, man nor woman."

He watched anxiously for her belief, quick coming in eyes and smile.

"Then mah mothah died, and mah stepfathah sold the falm—my fathar's falm—right quick an' took himself off some place. Acity's a pow'ful lonesome spot sometimes."

"Oh, yes!" she breathed.

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"There's a many reasons why men drink,
I reckon lonesomeness is a good few."

"Yo' don't any mo'," she filled his pause.
"Good reason!" A bitter laugh. "He
was an out-an'-out-scamp—cut yo' throat
fo' a penny. He made at me in Tom's
Hang-out, an' I knocked him down. It
killed him. They sent me to prison fo' two
years."

He pulled out of his pocket a lean leather
bag, such as countrymen carry, shook out
into his hand a couple of coins, then risked
his next fence.

"Yo' heard those folks say they'd leave
their do-key right yere?"

"Yes."

"I'm a jailbird an' I was gwine to be a
thief, but I put the key back. Yo', there
by the altah, with the baby—I been raised
religious—" He could not go on; he
dropped his face in his hands and held it
there. "I'll make mah own way honest or
—I'll—starve!" came hoarsely through his
fingers.

The girl drew his hands down.

She squeezed something into his palms.
He stared at it stupidly. It was a piece
of gold.

His young face was stained deep red;
then it paled to manhood. He laid the
money back in the baby's lap.

"Thank yo'," simply. "I couldn't go
fo' to take it."

"I don't need it. I got mo' fo' mahself."

"He'll need it." He touched the sleeping
face with the tip of his finger.

They sat very still in the warm twilight.
Then the girl said in a whisper:

"I was christened right in this church,
an' so was fathah. I sang right ovah in
that cornah."

"Mah church's over to the Fo'ges."

"I know it. Ain't that a right pretty
road runs to yo' place?"

They were smiling now. Presently they
were deep in the burden of the old, glad
gipsy days before they had been ever sick or
sorry, the immemorial magic of youth.

The coals in the stove dropped with a
clash. The man sat up stiffly like one
aroused from a dream. He looked at the
clock.

"Hallie," he said quickly, "it's one
o'clock. Merry Christmas!"

Strange as the greeting was to those two
strays, the girl answered guily:

"Merry Christmas, Houston!"

"We got to get long out o' this mighty
lively. The sexton's a-comin' back."

The girl stood up like a soldier.

"I'm rested now. We can walk over to
the junction an' take the milk train through
the Gap. It goes 'bout four o'clock."

She included him in her plan as if uncon-
sciously. Without a word he slung her
bag over his shoulder and took the baby
in his arms.

"Yo're right handy." She wound the
shawl around the bundle he carried awk-
wardly.

They made their way down the ravine,
the man breaking a trail in the snow crust
and walking with care.

The girl leaned against a tree. "I'm
just sort o' breathless, she said, "with her
hand against her side.

He stood in front of her to shield her
while she rested.

"I'm a pore, no-account creature." She
tried to laugh up into his face.

He slid his arm into hers and she leaned
on it. They went on in silence. Suddenly
she drew away from him.

In a few moments she sat down on a
stone.

"Listen! I cayn't go on. Yo' make
out to get the train."

He paid no heed.

"That a house yondah?"

She raised her languid eyes to where a
gaunt stone spectre reared its bones.

"It's the old mill. All tore out it is,
but the barn used to be right snug."

He lifted her by the hand.

"Come!"

The barn was dark and warm, and
smelled sweet of summer fields buzzing
with bees.

"Hay!" as he pulled open the door.

"There's stock, too," for the air was
full of soft breathings and long sighs.

He lighted one match after another by
which the barn showed mows deep with
hay and stalls of horses and cattle. At
the far end, a wise old donkey head was
thrust over the stall bar.

Houston seated the girl on a stanchion,
lighted the barn lantern, and began to
scoop out a hollow in the mow.

"Now," he said, and made her stand up,
his arm around her shoulder. "I got yo'
a right warm little bed, yo' an' him. I'll



"He jerked open the door and walked in. The sun shone upon the cow, the horses, and the grey old donkey—and upon something else"—p. 104



Drawn by
Helen L. Daniels

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leave the lantern fo' yo', an' I'll be in the small mow in the lean-to, if yo' need me."

"Houston"—his name sounded musical in her lingering voice—"yo're good to me, 'deed yo' are."

He drew away his arm and stood from her.

"Listen, Hallie. I got to say it. Let me take yo' West." Her clear gaze questioned him. "We can fo'get all that's been mean and sad back o' us. We can leave it yere."

The baby cried out in its sleep, and she held out her arms for it. Houston shook his head.

"Let him be mah baby, too. I'll give him mah name an' mah fathahhood. He shan't evah know."

"Yo' mean——"

"We'll find the parson right below yere, an' we'll be wedded man an' wife Christmas mawnin'. Don't it sound kind o' sweet to yo'?"

Still the girl's eyes glowed bright and strange on him.

"I can take care o' the three o' us out there, 'deed I can, mah little girl. Look at mah shoulders—look at mah back, Ain't they broad enough for three? I know right much 'bout falmin' an' stock, too, raised right 'mong 'em, you might say."

The words halted on her lips.

"What-all makes yo' want to do it?"

"Because I loved yo' the first minute I set eyes on yo' there in the church, when I thought yo' was sent right from heaven to me. Yo' were, too. An', ladybird, I reckoned maybe yo' thought somethin' o' me, too."

She spoke strangely.

"I nevah loved *him*. I was lonesome an' afear'd, an' he said he'd take care o' me an'——"

"Don't! He's daid—it's all daid. But yo' an' me an' this little trick, yere, we're alive an' it's Christmas Day."

She held out a thin little hand to him.

"Christmas gift." It was just a thread of sound.

He put the hand to his lips.

"Christmas gift—darlin'."

Upon those two strays—wild boy, wild girl—the beauty and the holiness of Christmas shone.



Dawn flowed greenish white over Fresh Spring Valley; already the sword of the

sun quivered keen above the rim of the hills. Hector McKimmon had "slept in" and was tugging on his clothes in a hurry. The house was full of the coaxing odour of hot coffee, fried chicken—Christmas breakfast. His little twig of a wife, with a face set dauntlessly to front all perils, even death itself, called sweetly:

"Christmas gift, daddy."

The man winced at the name.

"Christmas gift, Nanny Jo." He tried to be cheery. "But that an' all the rest o' it's got to wait while I foddle my stock. I can't make the beasts suffer for my sloth."

"Daddy"—again the name—"I dreamed last night that daughtie came home. Dreamed on Christmas Eve an' told on Christmas morn, they say comes true!"

"That dream can't ever come true! I have shut my door an' my heart against her. I ain't got any daughter."

He strode out of the room and the house without a look at her quivering face. He passed the ruin of his barns, burned in the autumn, swung out of his farm, down the road, and up to the mill barn, where, since the fire, he had housed his hay and cattle.

He jerked open the big door and walked in, the risen sun peering over his shoulders. The barn was dark and still. One bright sunray shot through the dust a golden light upon a meek cow, two horses, the grey old donkey—and upon something else.

In his old barn, watched by the kine and the ass, the Divine Family was revealed to him this Christmas morning—Joseph, strong and good; Mary, white and weary-eyed, but lovely, with the Child asleep in her arms.

And as Hector McKimmon looked and looked, the mother grew like his wandering daughter.

"She's my only one. If I, her father, cast her off, what can I ask of strangers? If I can only find her——"

"Daddy!" said the mother pitously.

The saint moved close to her. He spoke out stoutly,

"She's mah wife, suth, or will be in an hour."

McKinmon held out trembling hands and surprisingly found in them the child, soft and warm and wondering-eyed.

All the things he would say ran from him. He sobbed out just one simple old phrase: "It's Christmas!" and drew them all into his arms.

The PADRE'S STORY

BY JOHN OXENHAM

HE came to me in my small tent,
Quite late one night—
The night before the red-hot Vimy fight.
And his concern was evident.

"Padre," he said,
Fey-eyed and anxiously.
"To-morrow we go in,
And I'm a coward, I'm afraid.
Yes, I'm afraid to die,
I've lived so light and carelessly, you see,
And now—perhaps Death waits for me
Just over there.
This time to-morrow I may lie there dead.
Can you say anything to buck me up
And make a man of me?
Tell me about things! Tell me all—
Of death and after. If you can,
Fit me to meet the call
And play the man!"

I told him as I would a child :
Of God—and Christ—the Father's love—
The wondrous Father-Motherhood
That longs for all men's good—
Of the great joys above—the bliss
Of that new life for those
Who strive their best in this—
The simplest, highest things—
To him, the greatest.
And he listened eagerly,
Fey-eyed and anxiously.

And then we knelt
I said a little prayer,

Commending him to God : —
And as we knelt, I felt
God with us there, and new life in the boy.

"Padre," he said, when I had done,
"The fear has gone;
I see it all.
Now I can face the call,
And if it's death, my dying may alone
For some of those things I'd best not have done.
God bless you, sir, you've made a man
Of me, and if I die I'll pray me one.
From all you say, this doesn't end it all;
And now,
Through God and you, I'm strong to meet the Call."

In the dim dawn they went,
And some came back . . .
Him everywhere I sought,
But found him not,
Nor any who could tell
What him befell.
But this I know—
Whate'er his fate,
He did his duty—
Died, if he died,
In the knowledge of God's beauty . . .
And the rest can wait,





"In the thrilling pause the man opened his lips to speak ;
but at the moment there broke in voices"—p. 112.

Drawn by
J. Dewar Milne.

A FRIEND IN NEED

By

Mrs. BAILLIE REYNOLDS

THE postman knocked sharply upon the highly polished brass knocker at "The Laurels," and the staid parlourmaid went through the tiled hall, over the rugs of fur and Persian pile, to take the letters from the box. There was a sound of smothered giggling in the background, and a charming apparition, in a somewhat untidy but extremely becoming amethyst-coloured frock, with tumultuous hair, intercepted the returning messenger.

"Anything for us, Saunders?"

"I don't know, miss." Saunders looked suspicious, but could not interfere to prevent the pretty madcap from claiming the thick envelope which lay on the salver, and which was addressed to "L. E. P." at the post office, whence it had been re-inscribed to "The Laurels."

"An advertisement we've answered,

Saunders," explained Ida, with an air of mischief which led one to suppose that the advertisement in question must be a very frivolous one. She whisked off to join Esmé, who was hanging over the balusters, and together they retreated to their own room.

"You were an idiot to tell the post office to forward it," remarked Esmé. "I felt sure as sure could be that we should not get it without old Saunders looking it over. She is always first at the postman's knock."

"H'm ! I dare say you are right, Miss Prudence," answered Ida, curling herself up on the dainty bed-coverlet, which was beginning to show signs of the inveterate habit of the Misses Preston of sitting upon their beds in preference to any chair, however comfortable. "I thought the danger of going to the post office, after that day

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when I felt that somebody watched me, was really greater than the danger of old Saunders. She is not likely to mention it to Aunt Sophia, is she?"

"How should I know?" said Esmé pettishly, cuddling up against her sister, with a soft laugh which held a thrill of expectation. "Anyway, it's an adventure, and one must have something to do in this desert of dullness. If it wasn't for Denise, I should develop melancholia, and be shut up in a nursing home for a rest cure before you could turn round."

"Yes; Denise is a love. Oh, Esmé! What do you suppose she would say if she knew what a game we were up to?"

Ida's face was red with a certain ashamed discomfort; yet her fingers were quivering to open the envelope in her hand.

"When we began we didn't expect it would—er—go on quite so far, or so fast," remarked Esmé.

"If father and mother choose to go off to Calcutta and leave us stranded for five mortal months in the clutches of Aunt Sophia, we must either amuse ourselves or expire by inches," went on Ida with the air of one clearing herself. "Anyway, my good girl, I'll open it and see what he says this time!"

Her fingers trembled as she broke the envelope and drew forth the enclosure.

"*MY FAIR UNKNOWN,*" said the writer, "I could hardly believe in my good fortune when I received your charming note this morning. It seems to me that you possess every quality for which I have so long been in search. You tell me that you are young, that your tastes agree with my own, that you are considered pleasing in appearance—this is, I feel sure, too modest!—and that you are your own mistress. Only one thing then remains, and that is that we should meet, and see whether actual experience bears out my innermost conviction that we are made for each other. Personality is a strange thing, and so is the law of attraction; and it seems to me that, in looking upon each other's face, we could at once decide whether or no we should go further in this interesting and romantic friendship. If you will trust me with your portrait, I will send my own to you. I am oppressed by the fear that I could not possibly fulfil the requirements of one so charming as

yourself. I await your gracious reply with inexpressible impatience, and am, as I told you, your fervent, though unknown, admirer, "ISOLATED."

The two naughty things looked at each other with blushes and dimples and giggles. They read the letter through two or three times, and then sat staring interrogatively one at the other.

"Esmé," said Ida presently, in a small voice, "it almost sounds to me as if he was in earnest."

"Tut, tut!" said Esmé brusquely, twisting her face ridiculously as she glanced once more over the effusion. "But we can't send two photos, can we?" She laughed excitedly, a laugh that was partly a sob.

"If we don't send a photo of sorts, it is all over," said Ida slowly, "He will never write again."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Esmé, lying down on her back with her arms above her head.

Ida slipped off the bed and wandered round the room.

Upon the dressing table, among the silver trifles with which the two visitors had strewn it, stood a frame, holding the photo of a girl several years older than the madcap twins. It was a sweet face framed in loose hair, with a certain dove-like gentleness in the expression of the eyes, a certain tender sweetness in the fold of the lips. Ida took it up idly in her hand, and stood contemplating it. Then a new look flashed in her face; she turned impetuously to her sister. "Esmé! My woman, I have an idea!"

"What?" asked Esmé shortly.

"Let's send Denise's portrait!"

Esmé sat up straight. "No," she said, emitting the word like a pistol shot. "I'll not do anything so low down as that."

"Just think how he would fall in love with it," breathed Ida.

"You couldn't be such a wretch, after all Denise has done for us. Any fun we have had in this hole she has planned for us."

"Well, then," said Ida, putting down the photo with a sigh, "the best thing we can do is to write and say that we agree to what he suggests, but that we should like to see his photo before sending ours."

"Oh, no; we had better send one of sorts," replied Esmé, arising from her re-cumbent posture, and going to rout in an

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untidy drawer. "Look; here's a sweet one of Sybil! She's married and gone to India, so it wouldn't matter a bit, sending hers; and she does look a duck in her first ball-gown, doesn't she?"

"The very thing!" chuckled the other reprobate twin.

There was a sting of conscience in the hearts of both as they wrapped the photo carefully in tissue paper, stiffened it with card, and addressed the package, "Isolated, Box 92, Post Office, Robertstown."

In the seclusion of one's own room one can dare greatly. The dispatch of a postal package calls for no particular display of valour, whatever its contents. It was duly sent, and the following day brought a similar one to "The Laurels." This contained the portrait of so magnificent an officer that the hearts of the two undisciplined children almost stopped beating. He was overwhelming.

His age seemed to be about thirty; he was in full khaki, with a military moustache and wavy hair.

There was a large training-camp in Robertstown, and some of the best of men among the soldiers there. But that the unknown person who had advertised as being lonely and wanting a sympathetic wife, whose ridiculous advertisement they had answered out of sheer mischief, could be one of these imperial beings had never entered the girlish heads.

"Oh, Esmé!" gasped Ida. "We've done it now!"

Esmé was perusing the note that accompanied the photo. This was couched in far more earnest and confident terms than any previous one they had received. A meeting there must be, said the writer, and at the earliest possible moment. Time and place were both specified.

The situation was running away with them. They faced each other, grave-eyed.

"The thing has gone far enough," said Ida, in stilled tones.

Esmé looked gratefully upon her. "Oh, I am so glad you say that. We must write and say that, on consideration, we don't think, judging from the photo, that the man is our affinity, and so the correspondence must cease."

It was with a sense of profound relief that the madcaps sat down to compose an epistle upon these lines.

They slept better that night than they had done since they entered upon their mischievous enterprise.

The next morning was frosty and bright, and they awoke in great spirits. They had put a stop to a silly joke which, for the past few days, had threatened to become serious. They made up their minds to do such a thing no more. That evening they were actually going to a party—an almost unheard-of dissipation.

Aunt Sophia was a lady who, for the past ten years, had made a vocation out of being a widow. She had always disliked going out, and the pretext of her mourning now supplied a chronic reason why she must hold aloof from all society. The twins were barely seventeen, and their parents had thought that the fact of Mrs. Harrison's seclusion was a good thing rather than otherwise, as girls of their age, with their lessons to occupy them, were better not to be going about continually. But the long, empty Christmas holidays provided an excellent opportunity for Satan to find some mischief for those idle hands and brains.

Denise Hastings, the daughter of the deacon, was sorry for the two charming, wayward young things, shut up with so unsympathetic a companion as the elderly aunt. She took a fancy to them, and when her own people gave a Christmas reception at the deanery, she persuaded Mrs. Harrison to let them come, even though she declined to accompany them.

The twins had plenty of pretty frocks, and they were gleefully robing for this festive occasion in the pale-coloured, dainty dresses, when Saunders brought up another letter, redirected from the post office.

The sight of it dashed their joy. They had hoped that no reply would arrive to their decisive letter. An undefined apprehension filled their minds as they broke the seal.

To their horror, the note was couched in terms which amounted to a veiled threat. The writer more than hinted that they had been shadowed when fetching letters from the post office, and said that a meeting was absolutely necessary, now that the matter had gone so far.

The announcement that the fly was waiting to drive them to the deanery came just as they were sitting staring at one another with a dread sense of guilt creeping over them. Esmé slipped the fatal missive into

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her little bag; they took up their fans and gloves, and went downstair's feeling dazed, and wondering what would happen now—what they could do to extricate themselves from the snare into which their heedless feet had strayed.

They were a pretty pair as they entered the long Gothic hall in which Mrs. Hastings and the dean were receiving their guests: it had been the refectory of the old priory, and there was something incongruous in the presence of the modern ladies and gentlemen, and the strains of the regimental band.

Thanks to the kindness of Denise, the twins had made several friends; they were warmly greeted, and carried off to watch the amateur theatricals which had been arranged for the benefit of some local Red Cross fund, taking place in another part of the huge old rambling deanery.

They did not see their adored Denise at first, as she was in the tea-room busy with her parents' guests.

There were many of the officers from the camp present, and the little play to-night was brightly acted; Esmé was quite carried out of herself by its merriment. At its close the young subaltern to whom she had been introduced, and who was sitting by her, proposed an ice, and she rose from her seat, flushed and laughing.

At the moment the lights in the auditorium, which had been lowered for the play, were suddenly raised. The whole place was flooded with radiance, and Esmé saw, to her horror, the all-too-handsome officer of the portrait there before her eyes, leaning against the doorway, chatting with the Countess of Robshire.

The girl's heart beat until she felt she must suffocate.

"Who—who is that with Lady Robshire?" she managed to ask faintly.

The merry subaltern answered, with no apparent regard of her emotion:

"That? Oh! that's Colonel Lauderdale, of the Fifth—Sir Harold Lauderdale, you know."

"Is—is he nice?" asked the child timidly.

"Oh, I think he's all right! Rather high and mighty, but quite decent, I say, now is the moment for our ice; they are going to have Christmas mummers here in half an hour, and we mustn't miss that, must we?"

Esmé had to walk right past the awe-inspiring Colonel. She felt as if she must faint. Her little bag held that hectoring, insolent letter. There, lazily smiling under his chestnut moustache, was the man who had written it. As she went by she could not help lifting her panic-filled eyes to see whether he really knew her; and, encountering his glance of amusement at sight of Freddie Ogilvie with such a pretty girl, she read into it a message of secret understanding.

"Take me to my sister; I am feeling ill!" she managed to say.

The nice Freddie was greatly concerned, but he helped her to a seat and departed in search of Ida, who was positively shaken with terror upon hearing the dread news. At first they felt they must escape—go home at once—leave the deadly neighbourhood of the terrifying Colonel. But a few minutes' reflection showed them there was only one thing to be done, and that was to confess the whole mad freak to Denise, and ask her advice.

But it was a long time before they achieved their object. Denise was, for the first half of the evening, wholly taken up with her duties as daughter of the house. All the time that she moved about, gracious and self-forgetful, a certain dark faced man hung upon her steps, patiently awaiting his time. He had the bronzed skin of one who has seen tropical service. His eyes had the steady, tolerant, strangely gentle expression of the practised soldier.

"Captain Maxwell, you have had no supper nothing!" said her sweet voice presently.

"I am waiting to give you some," he replied.

"Well, I yield to the temptation. I am very tired, and should like to sit down a few minutes."

"You don't spare yourself," he said reprovingly, as he led her to a table in the corner.

"Well, you see, there is only one of me," laughed Denise, "and it is not easy to make it go round."

"That is true," said Hubert Maxwell, his clear eyes upon her face; "there is only one of you."

There was not much in the words, but there was that in the tone which Denise had never heard in this man's voice till

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now. A sudden shock of delightful surprise silenced her. To her own astonishment she felt herself trembling. He brought her some things to eat and drink, and sat down beside her.

"I am hesitating," he said, "to-day. I wonder if you could help me to make up my mind. They have offered me an appointment out in Rangoon instead of my headquarters work. I don't know whether to take it or not."

She looked up quickly. He was going away? The idea caught her breath and made her dizzy.

Of course, she answered as a well-bred English girl would do.

"Indeed! That is a distinction for you, is it not? Or what will your decision depend?"

She raised her eyes from her plate to his face, but encountered a look which made her weak and faint. There, in that warm, well-lit place, surrounded by chattering people and movement, and all the small stir of social life, Destiny seemed rushing upon her with a stride. It was not three months since she first saw Hubert Maxwell. Could it be true that he had become to her the one thing that mattered?

In the thrilling pause the man opened his lips to speak; but at the moment there broke in voices—eager, beseeching young voices.

"Oh, Denise! We have been looking for you everywhere—simply everywhere! I do hope we're not interrupting, but we have something most important to tell you!"

"We're in a scrape, and we want your advice, dear beloved," cooed Ida in confirmation.

For one long moment Denise wavered, staring, unable to come down to earth. Her eyes met those of the man, and read his deep disappointment. But what could she do? It was against all her ideals to say, "Run away, little girls!" To do so even in veiled terms would be to spoil this wondrous moment which was descending upon her out of the clouds.

"Why, you bad girls, what have you been doing?" she asked, in her sweet, even tones.

Maxwell gave back. He was deeply mortified. He was too uncertain of himself and her to be persistent. He gave one pleading,

frantic glance, which Denise was afraid to answer. He had not said quite enough—she had said nothing. Each was in too much doubt for decisive action.

The end of it was that the man retreated. He told himself that he would have his moment yet. Surely, surely, Denise had looked upon him as she did not look upon other men, if only for one sweet not-to-be-forgotten moment. He went out of the supper-room, leaving the pretty, fluffy twins, one each side of his divinity, pouncing into her ears some communication which she evidently regarded as important, for after the first few distract moments, she began to listen earnestly.

He strolled away to the large hall, where the band was playing, encountered his Colonel's wife and daughters, and was led away prisoner. It took him half an hour to escape, and he was hurrying back to the supper room when he was annexed by two young subalterns whom he had often befriended, and who earnestly begged him to give them five minutes, for they were afraid they really had put their foot in it this time.

When he heard what they had to tell him, he was of the opinion that they had. The sending out of Beauty Lauderdale's photo to entangle the eyes and heart of some unwary girl who, to judge from her picture, was really "the right kind of girl," as the two penitent "subs" phrased it, seemed a trifle "beyond the limit," as they themselves remarked.

And thus it came about that Captain Maxwell had no chance that evening of another word with Denise, and said good-bye to her rigidly, before her parents and a select audience, and went his way, torn in his mind between two opinions. Had she appeared to care enough to justify his coming back the following day and proposing? Or had she, as it almost seemed, seized upon the young girls' interruption as a welcome respite from the imprudent words he had been about to utter?



The next day, in the afternoon, Denise Hastings, in a quiet dress and with an unusually prim expression of countenance, emerged on foot from the deanery, and went her way to a secluded walk by the river-side, where, at that season of the year,

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nobody was to be seen. In her hand she held a packet containing the letters and the photo of Beauty Lauderdale, and these were wrapped in pink paper, and carried rather conspicuously, as agreed by letter with the unknown advertiser.

Denise had heard the confession of the two girls, of their folly in having answered the advertisement. She had been shown the letters and the photograph also. She had, of course, perceived at once the utter impossibility of the advertiser being Colonel Lauderdale, for the reason, among others, that he was a married man; furthermore, because he was a gentleman.

The girls had been somewhat staggered by this view of the case, and had argued that "nobody would dare to send somebody else's photograph," to which Denise serenely replied, "And what did you and Ida do?"

She had little doubt that some garrison servant was the author of the letters, which, however, had rather the appearance of having been written by an educated man. She saw clearly that if the thing were not promptly dealt with, blackmail might be the outcome of the girlish folly. Denise had no fear for herself; she knew she could deal sternly and summarily with any underbred person who might keep the tryst. But she felt a good deal alarmed at the thought of the thing having gone so far, and had made the two terrified twins promise by

all they held most sacred not to do so any more.

So the dean's beautiful daughter paced the wintry river-side, her mind not dwelling much upon the nature of her errand, because all her thoughts were busy with the memory of that brief, indecisive scene



"Concealing himself behind the trees
... he saw with horror that she was
carrying a pink package"—p. 114.

Drawn
by
J. Dewar Miles

in the supper-room yesterday. It was characteristic of Denise that, for the sake of two rather friendless little girls, she should put aside her own affairs and take a course which was not unattended with risk.

She strolled along the bank; stood meditating upon the river's brink; she sat upon

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a seat and waited. But nobody came. The early December dusk fell. After a vigil which had lasted more than an hour she turned away soberly and rather anxiously, left the spot, and bent her steps to "The Laurels," where she was obliged sorrowfully to admit to the two half-distracted children the failure of her mission.

There was nothing further to be done for the present, she thought. They could but wait and see whether "Isolated" made any sign. And, meanwhile, he had Sybil's photograph!

"You have just missed Captain Maxwell," said her mother, when she walked into the drawing-room later. "He came round an hour or more ago to make his adieux. He is accepting a post at Rangoon, and goes to London to-morrow."

Denise stood very still. She only said: "Indeed! Is that not sudden?"

But her limbs so shook that she could hardly cross the room. The twins had interfered last night. They had interfered again to-day, she bitterly told herself.

The same afternoon Hubert Maxwell, as ambassador, had gone to the river-side to apologise to the girl who had been made a fool of, and to explain to her that the advertisers were two hare-brained young subalterns who had meant a practical joke.

As Maxwell approached the trysting-place, among the thick pine trees, he saw, with a throb of his heart and also with considerable surprise, that Denise Hastings was strolling alone by the river bank! Here was a chance! Yet reflection showed that he must not take it, since he wore the flowers agreed upon as a signal—a few Russian violets and lilies-of-the-valley—and he could not show himself in such a place on such an errand except to someone with the corresponding sign. Concealing himself behind the trees, he watched with loving eyes the graceful movements of the woman he adored. And then, in horror, he saw that she was carrying a pink package!

The sweat broke out upon his brow. The pink package containing the advertiser's letters was to be the sign.

What! She—Denise—the woman who sat enthroned in his heart, so far above—

Yes! There was no escape from the awful conclusion that she was there to meet Colonel Lauderdale. No other woman was in sight. Heart-sick, miserable, quite un-

strung, he turned away and accepted his defeat.



That night, as he was sitting in his quarters destroying papers and otherwise preparing for his journey on the morrow, there was a knock at the door, and the two subalterns came in. Maxwell stood up and cleared his throat; they would want an explanation, of course. But they had a letter in their hands, and were so full of what they had come to say that they began without waiting for his story.

"I say, Maxwell, what happened to you this afternoon? It seems you never kept the appointment. Would you believe it? The girls who answered our wretched ad. are *ladies*—real sort, I mean. They are only outrageously young, and they were very dull and bored, so they did it as we did, just for a lark. They say they persuaded a great friend of theirs to go to the river this afternoon to explain and apologise; but as we did not turn up, they feel their only course is to throw themselves upon our mercy, and implore us not to be hard upon them. What do you think we ought to do or say? They evidently think we are some howling cads, for they actually offer us money—all they have. They don't sign their names, but Freddie and I are inclined to think they must be those ripping little Preston twins, because yesterday at the deanery party we met them, and Freddie got introduced to one of them, who turned as white as chalk when she saw Lauderdale, and she asked Freddie who that was. What are you after, Maxwell? Here's your hat, if that's what you want! Got to go out? Well, hang it! Just give a chap an answer before you go."

"It's all right, boys!" said Maxwell, tearing with trembling hands the letter in which he had accepted the Rangoon post. "I'm—I'm sorry I made such a mess about that appointment. I'm a thundering ass, but I think I can put it right. If—if it is those nice little girls, I know a friend of theirs. It isn't so very late—I think I'll go and consult her about the matter to-night."

"It's a quarter to ten," observed Freddie dubiously. "Bit late to pay a call, isn't it?"

But Maxwell was off, and they heard him dashing downstairs, four steps at a time.

My Idea of an Ideal Christmas

By

E. M. DELL, Mrs. BAILLIE REYNOLDS, E. F. BENSON, MARJORIE BOWEN,
ROSE MACAULAY, The Dean of DURHAM, Dr. HORTON,
Madame MARCHESI, and Leading Artists.

WHAT is your idea of an Ideal Christmas? Once upon a time—when we were younger than now—we all had pretty much the same notion on the subject. The Ideal Christmas began very early (much too early for the grown-ups' taste) with bulging stockings and an overflow meeting of bulky packages spreading on to one's bed. It went on at breakfast, where parents feigned surprise delightfully over the untidy parcels on their plates, containing as though by miracle just the things they most wanted!

Later came the gloriously exciting avalanche of the post. Christmas dinner was another splendid landmark in the day, and even the suspense as to whether the pudding would give one the thimble or button of perpetual spinsterhood or bachelorhood instead of the coveted sixpence, foreteller of wealth, only added a piquant thrill to the festivities. Tea was magnificent with crackers and a great iced cake.

Then the evening of games, in which not only daddy and mother but a rapturous

uncle or two joined, was something to look back upon all through the long stretch of months that separated one from another glorious Christmas Day!

Supposing an Ideal Christmas on the lines described above could be submitted to the approval of a plebiscite of British citizens under thirteen, it would certainly be passed by a vote that would sweep the country. Failing the possibility of such a joyous plebiscite as that, THE QUIVER has this year been asking various distinguished people for their idea of an Ideal Christmas.

Mrs. Baillie Reynolds, well known to all our readers in view of her fascinating serial "A Castle to Let," writes:

"The festival of Christmas has no meaning at all apart from the Christian faith. The fact is deeply embedded in its old name. Just

as the old English Christians called their days of rejoicing 'holy days,' so the celebration of Christ's Mass on the traditional day of Christ's birth is still enjoined, implicitly, by our very use of the word 'Christmas.'



The Ideal Old-style Christmas,
as depicted by Mr. C. E. Brock.

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The Servants' Ideal Christmas,
as imagined by Mr. H. M. Brock.

"It is a religious festival. But each festival of the Christian year has its particular note or feature for special emphasis. The Child who came to bring unity and good will among men, demands social efforts at this wonderful season. Never was there a time since the Incarnation when a season for reunion, for reconciliation, for hospitality, for commemoration of the absent, was so badly needed as it is this day among us. We live so fast—we are so scattered—the weight of the social catastrophe presses so heavily upon us. We forget the claims upon us of those of our own flesh, of the units of our family and blood. One of the things Christ came on earth to do was to consecrate the family. This is our work now. Cease to believe in the holiness of the family, and Christmas becomes meaningless.

"We know how meaningless it had become, before the war, when childless couples—*voluntarily childless*, God help them!—went to spend it at big hotels and hydros; anywhere where they could best escape from its real significance, and most easily forget

the existence of the thing they hated—the Holy Family.

"And now! How many thousands of us would give all we ever possessed for the chance to gather children of our own around our table in the old simple Christmas reunion!

"But if not our own—if we have laid all that made Christmas for us upon the altar of sacrifice and patriotism—then let us still rejoice: for this is the Feast of the Mother and the Son, and it gives us a glimpse into the hereafter, a Star in the East, by whose radiance we are able to descry the everlasting Child in the embrace of His human mother."



Mr. Gordon Browne gives his Conception
of a Schoolboy's Ideal Christmas.

Next comes the answer of the distinguished novelist who writes under the name of Marjorie Bowen:

"I think my ideal Christmas would be one such as Dickens writes of—plenty of snow and children, and good will, a comfortable fireside, a fine dinner, a family circle with no 'gaps' in it—and sweet dreams for the coming spring."

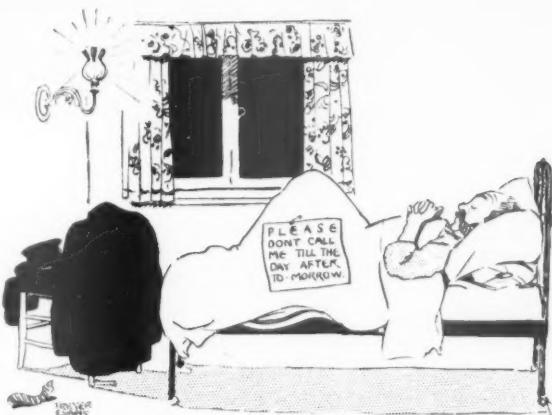
Miss Ethel M. Dell, whose "Way of an Eagle" is said to be one of the books our soldiers most frequently ask for, writes an answer brief but much to the point:

MY IDEA OF AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS

"My idea of an ideal Christmas is first to remember in whose honour it is kept, and second to give out as much happiness as possible, not only to those within the home circle, but to all within reach."

Mr. E. F. Benson, whose serial "Michael" will be remembered by all our readers, writes :

"I can think of nothing with regard to an ideal Christmas except the idea of a Christmas which sees peace on earth. But that does not mean the Pope's peace, which is merely an equivalent for preparation for another war. Civilisation and Christianity have an aching tooth which has got to be 'stopped' before there is peace."



A Special Constable's Ideal Christmas,
according to Dreyer Evans.

Here is the opinion of the well-known Dean of Durham :

"Nothing, to my thinking, could improve upon Christmas as the tradition of Christendom has given it to us—a festival of Family and Neighbourhood, when the bonds of social convention are relaxed, and a kingdom of kindness and freedom is set up. An ideal Christmas from my point of view could only be the Christmas we know, purged of the excesses which we have always lamented, and secured in all those highest observances which we have always assumed."

Dr. R. F. Horton writes :

"My idea of an ideal Christmas is first of all that it should have an ideal, and not be the sudden affair of beef and pudding into which it has declined. And what that ideal is Christmas should joyfully recall ; it is nothing short of human life made divine by the Son of God growing up in the body of our humanity."

Miss Rose Macaulay, the author of several distinguished novels, has an original idea of what Christmas ought to be. Those who know her will not be inclined to take it too seriously.

"My ideal Christmas would take place in one of those countries that have their summer at that season—perhaps New Zealand. The weather would therefore be hot, and I should be in a villa full of fruit-trees by the sea. I should spend the day largely



"We'd a proper blow-out mid-day, with the N.C.O.s waitin' on us like Orderly-men."

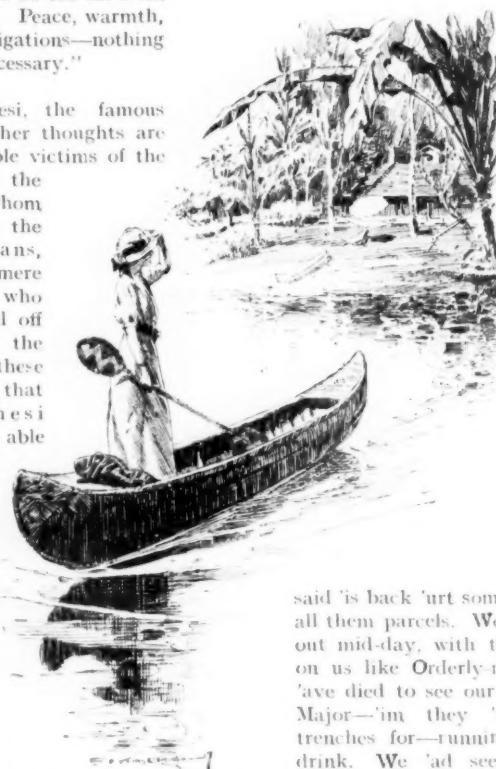
Dreyer
Evans
Drawing
Tenant

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in bathing, and cruising in my canoe about the islands off the coast. I should be so far from England that no one in it could expect me to send them cards or to write, though my friends would, out of kindness to my loneliness, write to me. It would therefore be a Christmas spent in receiving without giving—an ideal state. There would be no war going on—or, if there were, I should be too far from it to hear about it. Peace, warmth, the sea, and no obligations—nothing else is, I think, necessary."

Madame Marchesi, the famous singer, says that her thoughts are full of the miserable victims of the war, especially the prisoners, for whom she works, and the unhappy civilians, many of them mere boys and girls, who have been carried off into slavery by the Huns. It is to these unfortunate people that Madame Marchesi would like to be able to give an Ideal Christmas.

"Oh! what a Christmas I would like to give them! I would like the Holy Virgin to send the Infant Jesus, glorious and radiant, down to each one of them in their sleep, and He would kiss each of them on the brow so that they would sink into an ecstatic sleep in which they would see their most beloved one, and hold them in their arms and kiss them; in which they would forget all and know nothing but profound happiness—no more hunger nor thirst nor cold, nor fear nor despair. And that Christmas dream would last till the day a voice would call aloud, 'Go home—the war is over!' Would not that be a beautiful Christmas?"



Miss Rose Macaulay's Idea
of an Ideal Christmas,
pictured by Mr. E. P. Kinsella.

"Who knows? Perhaps it will be exactly like that. Let us hope and pray."

It would not be without interest to have the views of some of the people whose names are not in "Who's Who," but without whom the British Empire would get on mighty badly!

For instance, there is Mr. Thomas Atkins, who writes from Somewhere in France, describing experiences which were actual fact, though it amused him to adopt the style of Old Bill:

"Well, in course I'd like best ter be 'ome with the missus an' kiddies, but last time I didn't 'ave no such luck. It wasn't too bad 'ere, though. We was behind the line, in billets, an' the only bloke wot groused was the postman, 'oo said 'is back 'urt somethink chronic with all them parcels. We 'ad a proper blow-out mid-day, with the N.C.O.s waitin' on us like Orderly-men. Larf! You'd 'ave died to see our fat old Sergeant-Major—'im they 'ad to widen the trenches for—runnin' round with the drink. We 'ad seegars too, I can't afford to buy only shag meself, but they was real good. Must 'ave cost tuppence surely. An' in the evnnin' the Padre—

"e's a proper sport—got up a do for the village kiddies, an' the R.C. Chaplin, 'e did conjuring tricks for 'em too. They 'ad candles—bogies they call 'em—stuck in empty bottles. Made you think o' 'ome to see all them kiddies larfin' fit to bust at young Bert's French—'e's a real scholard is Bert—'Combeane?' 'Too booco!' 'Na poo!' Au' we give each of 'em 'beckee' and 'boolee' for 'soov'neer!'"

THE RETURN

The Story of a Christmas Eve

By BRENDA ELIZABETH SPENDER

AGNES WILLIAMS, standing on her doorstep, burdened by an armful of chrysanthemums from the florist's and half a dozen little parcels, was finding it somewhat difficult to open the silk bag she carried and get out her latch-key. Tall and slim in her graceful, widow-like wrap, with the fine lawn collar which relieved her mourning showing where the furs fell back from her throat, she looked absurdly young to be the mother of a grown-up daughter, absurdly well-to-do for a woman who found it necessary, in order to make so good a show in the world, to practise many small economies. Although it was Christmas Eve, the great sheaf of tawny-headed chrysanthemums, the contents of the little parcels which burdened her would have been banned as luxuries were it not for the fact that this Christmas was bringing to her house a visitor of such importance that nothing dainty or refined or luxurious could seem too good to put at his disposal.

"I think I really have remembered everything," she said to herself, bending to put her key into the shiny brass circle of the keyhole. "Rose leaves and crystallised violets for dessert, and the special coffee—"

She broke off because a foot passenger, a man of whose steps she had been conscious ringing down the street behind her, had come suddenly to a halt close at hand. He had not spoken, but his presence troubled her; and with the door open, even as she drew out her key, she turned. He was a tall man with iron-grey hair and moustache, and a look of wealth and fine breeding about him which only the lines drawn by hardship upon his face seemed to contradict; and though he had stopped at the foot of the steps which led up to her door, there would have seemed to the casual observer no reason why Agnes Williams should grow pale and almost drop her flowers, pressing her hand with the key still in it against the door-jamb for support.

"I am afraid I startled you." The words were banal enough, coming across twelve years of silence, but neither of them thought of that; the whole situation was too unlikely for any conventional way of facing it to exist. The stranger, after a moment's hesitation, came, hat in hand, up the few steps to Mrs. Williams's side and put his strong hand under her arm.

"Don't give way! My dear girl, I ought to have written! Let me take some of those parcels for you."

"You ought never to have come," said Mrs. Williams. Her voice was low enough, almost stifled, as though by the intensity of her feeling. Years in a cathedral city, where rumour has but a short way to run and so runs well, had taught her caution. Even now some passing acquaintance was bowing to her from the other side of the paved square. She mechanically pushed open the door. "Come in; we do not want anyone in the close to see us together."

The man followed her into the square, oak-panelled hall.

"This is all very pretty, very home-like." The man's voice broke abruptly. "Agnes, I've made good at last—and I've come back to you. Can't you tell me that I'm not—unwelcome, dear?"

Mrs. Williams's colour had not returned, though her eyes were curiously bright. She stood at the far side of the little table stripping off her gloves, and there was a suggestion of controlled but violent emotion in every line of her body.

"Why did you come?" she asked at last; and something in the man's stricken look made her flush, softening a little. "Oh, I know, of course; but after so many years it is too late—or else too soon."

He frowned at the last words, repeating them under his breath.

"I wanted, at any rate, to see you again—that's why I didn't write. I thought you might forbid me the house. And our little Lucy—she is—well?"

THE QUIVER

"Very well—very happy." The emotion in Agnes Williams's face suddenly came to the surface. Her hands were locked together in a gesture that had in it something of appeal. "That is why I did not give you a better welcome, Robert. A year ago it wouldn't have mattered so much if you had returned. We could have gone somewhere else, begun all over again; but the little girl is engaged—to a man in a very good position. His uncle is the Lord Lieutenant, and Guy de Grace himself, although he is so young, is a coming man, a secretary to the Minister for Agriculture. They met at the Hunt Ball last January, Lucy's first dance, and he fell in love with her at once. Lucy is very pretty, very sweet, and no one here knows anything about you. She is wrapped up in Guy, and now——"

"I have come back to spoil it all!"

Mrs. Williams shook her head despondently.

"I do not see how we could expect that Guy, in his position, would still wish to marry her if he knew that you were her father. He would feel that I had deceived him, tried to entrap him. Heaven knows, perhaps I have; it seemed such a great thing for her, a big future to look forward to, and Guy is a good man. It was for the little girl's happiness, not my own—I shall be very lonely."

There were tears in her eyes, and her husband, coming nearer, put his arm very diffidently about her shoulders, took out his handkerchief, and dried them. She looked up to him.

"Why did you never write? Was that letter of mine so cruel? It is twelve years since I heard from you."

"How could I write? I'd ruined your life and the child's. I never meant to come back unless I could make good. I've been in the South American republics ever since, and at first I had bad luck. It wasn't until this last year that I had anything to offer you, and then I waited to sell out so that I could bring it all home and pour it out at your feet and ask you if I might not hope to be forgiven."

"You were forgiven almost at once, but I could never tell you so, never take back the cruel things I said in that first letter after I knew. All the others came back to me—dead letters."

"Agnes!" The word was a cry from the man's heart. Her head was on his shoulder, and as he bent and kissed her, her mind flew back to the days of their honeymoon. They had spent it at Kashmir, for they had married while his regiment was in India. She had forgotten for a moment the years that had passed, the change of circumstances which must still hold their lives apart. She looked up at him, blushing.

"Robert, dear," she asked him, "you don't doubt any more that you're forgiven, that if it were not for Lucy's engagement I would never ask you to leave me again?"

"Must I go, then?"

"I am afraid you must. Lucy and Guy have been staying together at Callam, his uncle's place, about ten miles from here, but the child says that she must have this last Christmas here at home with me. I am expecting her and Guy this afternoon, and I should not like them to find you here. It would be rather difficult to explain you away, wouldn't it?"

The man sighed.

"Couldn't you pass me off as a casual caller—an old friend? I've spent years dreaming of Lucy's little face."

His wife shook her head.

"I couldn't treat you as a casual visitor, Robert; and, oh! my dear, Lucy has your eyes and your way of holding her head. Guy is not by any means a fool."

"I could be her uncle—my own brother. She can't remember me."

"I don't suppose she does; but I shouldn't be equal to acting it. Something would let the secret out; and, besides, it seems a shade more unfair to Guy. I am treating him badly enough already."

Robert Williams took up his hat.

"I suppose you're right, Agnes. A man has no business to bargain as to the date on which he shall come out of purgatory. Perhaps some day you would meet me in town somewhere and discuss things again—to see if there isn't a chance, after Lucy is married. If we lived abroad and—well—I can't spend my money on myself; it wasn't made for that. How am I to hand some over to you and the child?"

Agnes was silent. It seemed strange to her, after years of independence, to think of taking money even from her husband. Then she remembered that he was also the father of her child, and changed her purpose.



"Agnes, I've come back to you. Can't you tell
me that I'm not—unwelcome, dear?" (p. 116)

Drawn by
Balfred Salmon.

THE QUIVER

"Send me an address that will find you and I will write. I have all that I need, but I mustn't refuse your help for Lucy. I have a small income now that my father left me, and I make something with my brush. But Mrs. Guy de Grace will be able to do with more pin-money than I can give her, I dare say. She is so pretty that she should have all the lovely things there are to be had. You must go; but, wait one moment, and I will give you her photograph."

She pushed back the door of her drawing-room, took a photograph from a silver frame, and was returning with it in her hand, when a loud knock at the hall door, playfully repeated, startled her, and she stood still, the picture clutched against her breast.

"They've come! I never heard the motor," she whispered. Robert nodded.

"It is Kismet," he said; but his hands were trembling.

Mrs. Williams herself opened the door, her servant, who had come upstairs at the knock, turning back after a puzzled glance at the tall gentleman who must have come in with her mistress.

"Mums!" cried a voice as gay and glad as a bird's call, and a girl in blue with white, flying furs came dancing into the warm, flower-scented hall and flung soft young arms about her mother's neck. "You darling; how nice it is to see you again!"

The pale young man with the kind, steady, hazel eyes who followed her had to be content with Mrs. Williams's left hand and as much of her smile as her daughter's embrace left visible until Miss Williams, becoming aware of the presence of a stranger, released her mother and drew back, laughing and blushing.

"I didn't see that anyone was here, darling."

"This will be a great surprise for you, Childie." Mrs. Williams's voice was not very steady, and Lucy, who had been looking at the stranger with eyes in which wonder contended with surprise, interrupted her.

"I mean—I know who it is." She flew to Williams, both hands outstretched, her face raised to his. "It's my own dear——"

Her mother knew the word that was on her lips and forestalled it.

"Your uncle—your father's brother.

Robert, this is Mr. de Grace—Captain Williams."

"I made sure you were dad, said Lucy, clinging to Williams's arm. "Are you and dad very much alike?"

"Remarkably alike." It was the first intelligible word beyond a conventional phrase of greeting to de Grace which Robert had had the self-command to utter. His wife's attitude to Lucy had seemed to him almost too much that of a worshipper, too ready for sacrifice. Now, when he saw her face to face, her fresh, sweet, childish beauty, the light in her eyes, the tenderness of her lips, that he could have allowed himself to imperil her happiness appalled him.

"You are going to stay now that you have found your way here, aren't you, uncle?" Lucy patted his hand. "I've such lots and lots of things to talk to you about. You see Mother hasn't any brothers, so I've never had an uncle before, and it will be nice for Guy to have another man to smoke with and—— Oh, you didn't come because there was news of dad, did you?"

Williams shook his head.

"You seem very fond of that father of yours, considering how long it is since you saw him."

"Why, of course; but isn't it funny how things always happen together. Only today, on the way home, Guy and I were talking about him; and Guy has always thought that he was dead and that Mums was a widow—because she always wears those widow dresses, I suppose."

Guy de Grace, who was sensitive enough to realise that the stress his little fiancée laid upon the subject was painful to both the elder people, came to the rescue, turning to Mrs. Williams with an account of Lucy's newest accomplishment.

"Uncle John lent us the runabout car, Mrs. Williams, and Lucy has learned to drive! She's splendid."

"I am going to take you out some day soon—Guy is going to send for his car!"

"I have mine here in the garage at the hotel," said Williams, glad of the topic. Mrs. Williams laughed.

"Robert, you're too confiding. As for you, Guy, I suppose if Lucy were to turn the car over on the top of you you'd say it was just her cleverness; but I am much too well acquainted with my daughter's absence of mind to trust myself out with her."

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The laughter and badinage set them at their ease, and the arrival of tea prevented the renewal of the difficult topic.

Agnes, in order to carry out the deception she had initiated, was obliged to press her so-called brother-in-law to send for his luggage and occupy the second spare-room; but Williams refused, remarking that he was a tiresome housemate and that they would see quite enough of him. He went back to his hotel in good time to dress for dinner, and Mrs. Williams departed to the kitchen for a last consultation with her cook. Presently she went upstairs, to find Lucy, already dressed in the white frock she loved best, waiting for her in her room. For the first time in her life poor Agnes Williams found it difficult to meet her daughter's eyes, and busied herself before the glass as a matter of self-protection.

"Did you have a good time at Callam, dear? Did you like Sir John as much as you thought you should?"

"Quite, Mumsie darling; it was like a good dream altogether. Just the loveliest time, and Lady Callam is a dear. But I don't want to talk about them now. Isn't it wonderful about Uncle Robert!"

"I suppose it is."

Lucy got up from her seat on the bed, leaving the pink eiderdown rumpled, and came nearer.

"Aren't you glad? Don't you like Uncle Robert very much? Do you know, sometimes I *have* felt it was lonely, not knowing any of dad's people, only yours; and I'm so glad we're beginning to know them now."

Mrs. Williams, engaged in doing up the tucker of her soft, black dress so that it might show as little as possible of her white neck and shoulders, spoke too impetuously.

"But your father's parents died years ago, and he has no brothers and sisters——"

"Except Uncle Robert."

The sudden red stung Agnes Williams's cheeks.

"Except Uncle Robert," she echoed, wishing that Lucy would go away and give her a moment in which to control herself and think out her course of conduct for the evening before her.

"It is funny that his name is Robert—dad's is too, isn't it?"

"All the Williamses are christened Robert in that family," said Agnes with the

untruthfulness of her intention making the truth of her statement of no avail for her own consolation.

"You ought to have christened me Roberta."

"I suppose I ought to have—Lucy, I'm sure I'm late. Tell me, shall I do?"

"You're lovely—just pin in the violets," said her daughter, but the ruse failed of its effect. "Do you know Guy told me to-day that Lady Callam thinks that she knew dad out in India years ago, before she was married. If they were both Robert Williams and both captains, it might have been uncle though—hers was in the Army. Did she tell you when she came to call?"

Fortunately Agnes Williams was at that moment bending over an open drawer looking for one of the fine lace handkerchiefs, relics of wealthier days, which she liked to use in the evening. It was her habit by the wise use of such trifles to give that quiet touch of elegance to her appearance which had opened the doors of the exclusive society of a cathedral city to herself, a not very well known miniaturist, and to Lucy, then a mere schoolgirl. Now she stood with her hands in the drawer fumbling at the ribbons of a sachet as though they had been the Gordian knot itself, her heart beating so wildly that she could not speak. The danger which had seemed far enough away, avoidable in the afternoon, had suddenly drawn close, ringing her round with its oppressive nearness, suffocating her with fear. Lucy, no doubt, would believe that the stranger who had arrived to-day was her uncle, however much she might wonder at his Christian name and his military rank. Nothing, she thought, could change her child's trust in her, but Guy de Grace was different. Simple, honourable gentleman as Guy was, he had lived in the world, he had lost the childish habit of taking everything at its face value which Lucy still retained. He held the clue to her secret in his hand, at any moment it might occur to him to scrutinise it; and she herself was sufficiently a reader of character to surmise that de Grace was a man who, strictly honourable himself, would find deception hard to forgive in others. Lady Callam might not be sure that she had met Lucy's father, but it was more than probable—an Army man in India goes everywhere. Did she also know the whole truth about him, the thing from

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which all these years his wife had been trying to disconnect herself and her child, to hide from the world's eye, to live down in its memory? If they met, if Lady Callam made sure that Robert Williams was the man whom she had known, would the old scandal start to life again and threaten Lucy's happiness? Agnes, putting the violets Lucy had laid upon her table into the breast of her dress, told herself that she had been mad to let Robert stay for a moment meeting Guy, running such terrible risks of discovery. She must send him away, force him to invent some excuse and go. She turned to Lucy, holding out a trembling hand, and the girl looked at her, vaguely puzzled by something in her appearance.

"Darling, I must go down, your uncle will be arriving before I'm there. Will you stay one moment—tidy the room a little, shut my jewel case and the drawers?"

Lucy, who had looked forward to floating downstairs into her lover's presence with her arm about her mother's waist, addressed herself to her task a little sadly, but Agnes, hurrying down, found herself already too late. Robert had come back and was talking on the hearthrug to Guy, who watched the staircase for his sweetheart's coming. It was impossible to tell her husband now that he must leave; the gay little dinner must be eaten, the evening in the drawing-room while Lucy sang and Guy hung over the piano somehow lived through before she could even speak a word of warning.

Afterwards Agnes Williams wondered how she managed as she did to bear her part of the evening's gaiety; listening to herself, to her own laughter, she could almost believe that it was not forced, that it did not hide a panic of fear. She dared not even risk a meaning glance in Robert's direction, and when their eyes did meet the happiness in his smote her with a sudden pain because it was to be so short-lived.

It seemed cruel that after his years of wandering he should come back as a stranger to his own wife and child. She saw that he watched Lucy with a tenderness on his lined face, an indulgent admiration in his eyes that to her, knowing that this was all of his little daughter that he was ever likely to see, seemed tragic. She looked at his grizzled head; surely he had been cruelly punished for a sin that had

hurt no one so much as himself, and his punishment had been a long one. It should have ended now but that there was Lucy's happiness to be considered.

If the evening was long to her, it seemed short enough to the others—to Robert, re-united under whatever pretence to wife and child, savouring the taste of home life after years of exile; to Lucy, pleased by his affectionate admiration, more happy still because the sadness in her lover's eyes, which sometimes hurt her though she had never even acknowledged to herself that it did, had melted and all she read in them was love. Guy de Grace, never a boisterous talker but at times witty and amusing beyond the ability of ordinary mortals, was at his best to-night, a faint colour burnt in his pale face, he looked care-free, young and debonair. It was long after eleven before the others of the little party would agree that it should break up, and then the impulse came from her.

"Lucy dear, you must go up to bed—you will be dead tired to-morrow, and then there is the ball on Wednesday to think of. I won't be seen taking a washed-out daughter about, and so I warn you. Uncle Robert too has had a long day and I must keep him for a little chat over old times, though it may be cruel of me."

De Grace naturally took the cue his hostess offered him, and declared that he had letters to write in his room before he slept, and the party broke up. When the drawing-room door had closed behind the young people, Agnes turned to her husband and laid on his arm a hand that all her self-control could not keep from trembling.

"I'm so sorry, Robert, but you must go—you mustn't come here again, not even to-morrow. Send me a note from the hotel saying you're ill or called away or anything. Guy's aunt, Lady Callam, has told him that she knew you in India!"

Lady Callam? I didn't know her, then!"

"But it was before she was married. I can't remember who she was then; it doesn't much matter so long as she remembers you. If you stay she will be sure to meet you and recognise you! She knows you were in the Army—all the rest perhaps. The whole thing may come out and Lucy and Guy—we can't even confess now we have lied to them both."



"I am going to tell him now. I
shall give him back his ring"—p. 128.

Drawn by
Basil of Salmon.

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The big man looked down at her, perplexed, serious.

"But Christmas Day—it seems such an odd sort of day to be sent for in a hurry, doesn't it?" There was a longing in his tone and she heard it.

"Ah, my dear, it's hard on you—it's hard on me."

"Do you mean that?" The man's voice was rough with the strength of his feeling, and when she nodded he stood for a moment looking into her eyes, his worn features beautified. "My own," he said, "my dear."

The tall old clock in the hall striking twelve recalled them to the present moment. Williams squared his shoulders.

"I'll be going now and I'll get away early to-morrow morning, make out my partner has been taken ill. We won't introduce any more relations into the matter—there has been one too many here already."

They passed out into the hall arm in arm, and Agnes helped her husband into his overcoat and herself turned up the collar around his throat, for the night was frosty and cold as a Christmas Eve should be.

"So it's 'Good-bye,' little woman," said Robert. "It's a bit rough, for we've both got a good many years before us to all appearances and it's apt to be lonely."

"You—you think I'm right?"

"You're right," he answered. "We've had our day and I spoilt it; now it's the child's."

Before his strength she could confess her weakness.

"It is very hard," the tears choked her voice, "in spite of everything—my dear, dear husband!"

Robert put his arms about her and their lips met as their hearts throbbed against each other.

A sound from the staircase made them turn their heads, his arm still about her, her hands both held in one of his. At the bend of the stairs stood Lucy, her white dressing-gown with its pink ribbons making her look younger, more childish than ever, her hair falling in silky curls across her shoulders. Meeting their startled eyes, she came nearer.

"I—I wanted to wish you and Uncle Robert a Happy Christmas—I heard it strike twelve!" She was brave enough, but the colour had fled from her cheeks and her eyes were wide and afraid. Child as she

was, she had not missed the significance of the embrace which she had witnessed. "I—I don't understand," she said, and her voice broke miserably. "Mother!"

Agnes, looking at her child's face, felt her heart sink with a sickening fear.

"I was saying good night to your uncle," she faltered, knew that the words must seem the confession of an intrigue utterly sly and sordid, and reddened herself, seeing the flush mount in the girl's innocent cheek. Lucy stood staring at her mother for a little while as though she were learning her anew, finding some hitherto unguessed meanings in the face she had loved. Then with a desolate cry she turned and groped her way up the stairs. It was Robert who drew her back with his hand upon her arm.

"You had better know the truth than think lightly of your mother. Lucy, you were right this afternoon—I am your father!"

"Why did you tell her?"

The words in his wife's voice were a wail of despair. Lucy, his hand still on her arm, stood looking from one of them to the other.

"I—I don't understand," she said. "Dear dad has come home at last, and yet you pretended that he was only Uncle Robert. Has it been a joke that I'm too silly to understand? But Guy didn't see it either!"

"It wasn't a joke, little girl. It was because Guy is here. He isn't to know."

"Guy isn't to know? Ah, everything has gone wrong altogether. Why shouldn't Guy know anything that I do?"

Her father and mother exchanged glances, then the man shrugged his shoulders. His low voice was hoarse with pain, but he showed no other sign of flinching.

"We have wished that you should not know, Lucy, but I am afraid that now you must. When you were a little girl, as I dare say you know, I was in the Indian Army—I cheated at cards—the King had no further use for my services."

It was Agnes who, with a tremulous eagerness, took up the tale.

"He was all alone at a terrible station—a place in the plains—I had had to take you back to England; he was ill with the heat, he hardly knew what he was doing and we were pressed for money; I had none of my own then, and it had cost so much sending us home. Afterwards he went right away—

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it was as though he was dead—I could not tell him that it had not changed my love for him until to-day."

Lucy did not reply at once, but when she raised her face they saw by the light of the shaded lamps an added tenderness in its childlike beauty.

"Poor little mother—poor dear daddy." She nestled close to them and smiled, though the tears stood in her eyes. "Don't you feel we're all more each other's, nearer together because we all know everything?"

Agnes spoke slowly, with an effort.

"Yes, but it will be difficult for you now, you know, having to keep it from Guy."

"Keep it from Guy?"

"Little one, don't be foolish! Your father is going to leave us to-night; he is never going to claim us again. Everyone here is welcome to believe, as far as that goes, that I am a widow. We feel that if he were to stay someone might recognise him and remember the old trouble, and for your sake it's better forgotten."

"My sake?" Her perplexity was sincere.

"My dearest, Guy would marry you if he knew, no doubt—if you would let him—because he is an honourable gentleman, but he would probably never have asked you to marry him if he had known."

Lucy stood silent, still, save for the moving of her breast under the white lace frills of her dressing-gown and her fingers twisting in and out of the pink ribbon girdle at her waist. Her

mother drew her nearer with a tender touch.



Basil Sammons

"And yet—and yet
you loved me?"—p. 123.

Drawn by
Basil Sammons

"So we three will keep the secret, Lucy—for Guy's sake as much as yours. He loves you so absolutely, and you will make him happy as no other girl could. For

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him to know about your father's disgrace would spoil it all. It is best for him that he should not know."

"But it is acting a lie," the girl objected.

"For his good—it would ruin his life to lose you now, and you could tell him some day after you are married if you thought it best." The look in her child's clear, fearless eyes showed Agnes Williams the duplicity which she was advocating and she stood dumb.

"I am going to tell him now. I shall give him back his ring. I couldn't do that to Guy!"

Lucy's little feet, thrust naked into babyish pink-wool slippers, were already on the stairs when her father started forward a second time to stay her.

"Stop her, Agnes—for Heaven's sake! It will break her heart."

"She is right," said Agnes Williams, suddenly coming into her own again and holding up her head. "Lucy, if it breaks your heart, still it is right. We will tell him everything to-morrow."

"To-morrow? Oh, no, I must tell him now." This impatience was the only sign of her agitation which Lucy had given. "I couldn't wait."

The slight figure in the white draperies went fluttering up the dark old staircase, and the watchers in the hall below stood hand in hand in the lamp-lit hall almost motionless, listening until they heard her knocking upon her lover's door.

Guy came out in his shirt-sleeves and caught his breath at the sight of her, the soft white draperies, the flying hair. There was something more than surprise, a man's wonder at the woman God has given him in his voice as he questioned her.

"Lucy, is anything the matter? What is it, little girl?"

"Just this, Guy." Her calm seemed strange to the listeners, but Lucy Williams was light and fluttering only in the light things of life. "It seems that Uncle Robert wasn't here after all—it was dad come back to us. Mother has just told me, and, Guy, I want to give you back your ring."

They heard him interrupt her with a question, but the girl's voice persisted.

"Here it is. Why? Years ago when I was a little girl dad cheated at cards and had to leave the Army, so you see it wouldn't do for you to marry me, not at all. I want you to be quite free and marry someone—you could be proud of."

De Grace had taken her hands—his ring and all. They looked two children, he in his shirt-sleeves, his dark head bent over her, she in her white *negligée*, but there was maturity enough in the girl's courage, in the sweetness of the man's eyes.

"I am going to marry someone I am proud of."

Lucy caught her breath and the little gesture of dismay that she made shook down a curl from her shoulders to touch his hand.

"Not me, Guy. I will never marry you. If you had known when you asked me, it would have been different, but now I should always think that it was just because you are so very honourable. You might be sorry."

"But I did know." There was a tender laughter in his voice. "My aunt told me the whole story on the night of the Hunt Ball the first time I ever saw you."

"And—you didn't mind?"

"It's your father's concern and your mother's, not ours. It seems a kind of impertinence for me to have any attitude at all to a thing that is so personal, and in all these years—I think he's wiped it out. Do you know I'm thankful he came back. I thought you must know, and yet you hadn't confided in me that hurt a bit."

"And yet," Lucy's voice was almost a whisper, "and yet you loved me?"

"That's the explanation," said Guy.

The listeners in the hall below heard nothing more save murmurs too indistinct to be translated. They turned and looked into each other's eyes.

"Home at last," said Robert, and his wife, clinging to him, echoed the words.

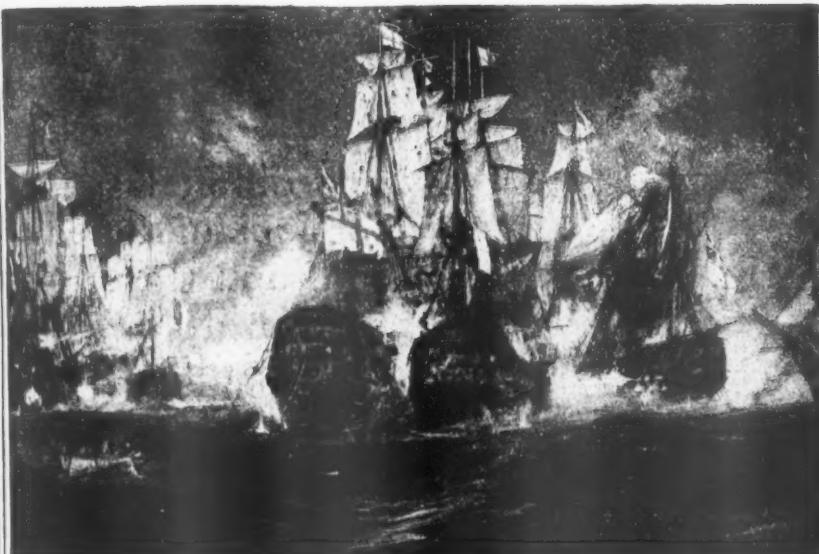
"Home at last—on Christmas Day in the morning."



"'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay"

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By CHARLES DIXON, R.I.



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"Tales of a
Toffee Tin."

*In the
Trade.*

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for Jack of the simple soul and the straight punch loves good honest toffee.

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II.—THE QUESTION OF HOUSES

SO far as I remember, Jane Austen never admits into the polite circle of her *dramatis personae* one single domestic servant, not even a butler assured of his aitches.

This shelving of the kitchen by a novelist of the social world so acute and generous as Miss Austen has a high moral significance. Her stage might have been set for her by a fashionable architect. Observe it attentively, and you will see that it is all drawing-room. Never once does she introduce her elegant ladies into an underground kitchen nor beguile them upstairs into a dark attic under the tiles. The door of her drawing-room opens only to admit baronets and their ladies, or gallant officers and their Dulcineas, or country parsons and their innumerable olive branches. Never once (I am trusting to a memory which has played me some ill tricks in my life) does she produce for us a living servant of that period, whose heart is as hungry for love as that of any young Miss, and whose limbs are often as tired and aching as those of any fox-hunter.

Oblivious of Mary Ann

Now, the average house which we have inherited from the days of Jane Austen manifests a like oblivion to the domestic servant. It is a house which keeps the servant out of view. Down under the earth she cooks our dinner, and high up with the slates and chimney pots she says her prayers, dreams her dreams, and sleeps off the toil of yesterday, only to be ready for the toil of to-morrow. In a well-regulated house, like a well-regulated novel, you never see the servants. They wait upon you at

meals, but your back is turned upon them. All their brushing and sweeping is done while you are drinking your early tea, and when you descend to the dining-room breakfast is laid and the servants are invisible.

Angry with the Architect

I am not angry with Jane Austen, but I am angry with the architect. The architect of that period, having shown his plans for drawing-room, dining-room, bedroom, and dressing room, should have turned the sheet and said to his client: "We now come to the most important part of the house—the servants' quarters."

Let us imagine the dialogue.

Client. What is this you say?—the most important part of the house?

Architect. And for two reasons I call those quarters the most important part of the house. Permit me to illuminate the matter. You will agree with me that your domestic happiness turns very largely—

Client. On my dinner. Ha, ha!—very good; I see now what you are driving at. Yes, of course. The most important part of the house. Very good!

Architect. —on the contentment of your servants. For society has so contrived domestic life that every man's happiness is at the mercy of his servants. Therefore it is of the first importance that your servants should be healthy, seeing that good health is the foundation of happiness. If you put your cook to sleep in a room under the slates which is like an oven in summer you must not expect a cheerful breakfast, nor must your wife look forward with pleasure to her interview with that cook after breakfast concerning the day's orders.

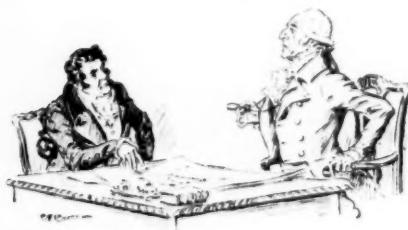
THE QUIVER

Client. But do you mean to tell me that I am to provide proper bedrooms for my servants? Why, my foolish friend, you would ruin me! I keep eight servants, and should need another house if I gave them the accommodation you are suggesting.

Architect. Nevertheless——

Client. I see where you are wrong. You are thinking of servants as if they were the same flesh and blood as ourselves. But servants have been bred differently. They have always been used to living rough. Why, coming into a gentleman's house is like entering heaven for those people. Think what they get to eat!

Architect. In olden days servants came



"Do you mean to tell me that I am to provide proper bedrooms for my servants?"

from a class that lived very like animals, but you would not now be content with Hodge for a butler. Your butler must be as imposing as an archdeacon, and your housemaids as brilliant as young ladies behind the counters of Jay's.

Client. But what am I to do?

Architect. I said I had two reasons for calling the servants' quarters the most important part of the house. Let me state them. First, if you keep servants, and you want your servants to be healthy and strong, you must give them airy sleeping quarters and a bright resting-room where they can escape from the heat of the kitchen. For your happiness depends upon the contentment of your servants. This is my first reason. Let us call it the politic humanitarian reason. Now, my second reason is of quite another order. I will call it, if you like, the prophetic reason. I see a day approaching when the work which is now done by servants will be done by your wife and daughters——

Client. Good heavens!

Architect. ——a day when it will be

impossible for you to get anybody but a charwoman to come in and help you with the work of your house. Therefore, in my plans I have provided for every conceivable convenience and every known invention which render as light as possible the labours of the house. Observe, for example . . .

And here the architect would dilate upon his plans.

We must make Servants Unnecessary

The point that confronts us is this. We must convert our old inhuman houses into houses which recognise the existence of servants, while we are building our new houses which will make servants unnecessary.

Human nature being what it is, almost everything in this matter turns on the house. You may find a woman here and there who is superior to the house, and will make the most dismal and inconvenient villa into a radiant heaven of domestic ravishment. But such women are rare birds. As a rule, the woman will say, Most gladly would I do without servants if only I had a sensible house; but how can anybody expect me to scrub down a flight of twisting basement stairs or carry a slop-pail up and down two or three floors?

Madam, I reply, you have excellent reasons: my sympathy is at your feet. But I would beg you to consider the possibility of moving into a less inconvenient house, and I would urge you in the same breath to make your voice heard in the offices of the architect. For we must build from this moment a new order of houses, houses which are an expression of our own vigorous period—a period in which women will have something to say in every matter which touches domestic life. No architect should in future draw the plans of a domestic dwelling without the assistance of a lady who does her own housework. Women must say to the architect, Houses are places in which a great deal of work has to be done; you are no doubt unaware of this fact, but it is true; and if you will do your own housework for a month I assure you that a bonfire will soon be made in your office grate of all your old plans for a family residence.

Let us proceed to a few details.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

I condemn as obsolete, to begin with, the atrocious utensil entitled a slop-pail. If you can have water-pipes in your bathroom, you can have them in your bedroom; and if you can empty your bath by pulling up a plug, so in like manner you can empty your washbasin.

Away with Atrocities

Now, by the introduction of water-pipes to the bedroom we get rid of two things—the slop-pail and the washstand. Refinement and sanitation tell us that we should keep nothing in our bedrooms which requires to be emptied into a pail and carried elsewhere. Our bedrooms, where we spend some eight hours of the twenty-four in getting back our health and strength, should be as fresh and pure and sanitary as our drawing-rooms. Very well: we get rid of the slop-pail. But we also get rid of the washing-stand, which means that there is less to clean in the bedroom, and no heavy work in carrying water to fill up the jugs. Moreover, we do not need to send round little cans of hot water twice a day to the various bedrooms. Therefore, by simply

a bungalow; but in cities and towns this is a blessing too great for humanity, and we must therefore accept stairs and corridors as inevitable. But the architect of the future will keep his stairs to a minimum, and will abbreviate his corridors to a landing. Women must expect stairs, and must



"Away with them to their mother the East."

Drawn by
C. E. Brock, R.I.

be prepared to accept landings. The question for them is, How can we lighten the work of brooming and dusting?

Avoid Carpets

Much can be achieved by avoiding carpets. I hope to live long enough to see the human race grow superior to carpets, which are of all forms of floor covering the most unscientific and (deeply considered) disgusting. Unless you have a spring-cleaning once a week, not all the brushing of a Hercules will get rid of the dust that harbours in your carpets. They should never be allowed. They should not be put down by Parliament, but taken up by the sanitary inspector—taken up and deported. Away with them to their mother the East.

Linoleum is an excellent covering for stairs and corridors, and would by now (I am persuaded) be in general use, to the ruin of carpet manufacturers, but for the execrable taste of its makers. There are few greater vulgarians than your maker of oilcloth. He thinks he must make his oilcloth look like a carpet. But there is a movement away from this Victorian falsity. Buy linoleum which is of one colour, and which honestly says it is linoleum and not carpet. Such linoleums on your corridors and stairs lighten housework. They need to be rubbed



"Get rid of your servants and the kitchen becomes as dear to you as any room in the house."

introducing two pipes of water into our bedrooms we do away with a very considerable amount of housework.

There is the question of stairs—stairs and corridors. Now, the ideal arrangement is

THE QUIVER

over bat once a week, and with good thick paper underneath have no thin feeling to the foot.

Skirting boards should be rounded where they meet the floor.

As for the living-rooms, the beginning of wisdom lies in simplicity. Look round those rooms before you begin your servantless life and decide what you can do without. Keep nothing that is not beautiful among your decorations, and nothing that is not useful among your furniture. *Give yourself as little dusting as possible.* At first, unless you are already acquainted with the teachings of art, you will be horrified by the sacrifice of your possessions. You will think you are stripping the room bare. You will say, I can't give up this, and I must keep that. But try the experiment of Japan. See how one good picture looks on a wall, instead of seven bad ones; and one good piece of china on your mantelpiece, instead of a shelf like a shop-window; and how a very few articles of furniture strike the eye, with plenty of cool floor-space between, instead of a jumble like a saleroom. Empty your room, and then give it character by a few strong touches of personality. A vase of beautiful flowers is decoration enough for a room quietly furnished.

And now let us conclude where we should have begun—in the kitchen.

I have the highest ideal for the kitchen. I think it can be made the heart of the home, instead of a mere annexe to the householder's stomach. Get rid of the servants, and take over that territory, incorporating it into your intimate family life, and the kitchen becomes as dear to you as any room in the house. Try it!

Begin by putting a vase of chrysanthemums on the table.

The great charm of a kitchen is its opportunities for self-expression. In the drawing-room the mistress of the house can show only the decorative side of her nature; but in the kitchen she can reveal her whole and elemental nature. When once she takes over the kitchen from representatives of another class in the community, she becomes aware of it as a part of her own possessions, and a part in which she must bring the entire domestic life of her household to a fine focus.

"Mother's making a new cake! Doesn't it smell scrumptious!" Imagine the chil-

dren crowding in to see the tin taken from the oven! And what an afternoon that will be when the smell of your toffee-making ascends to the upper regions!

Have you thought of an oil-stove?

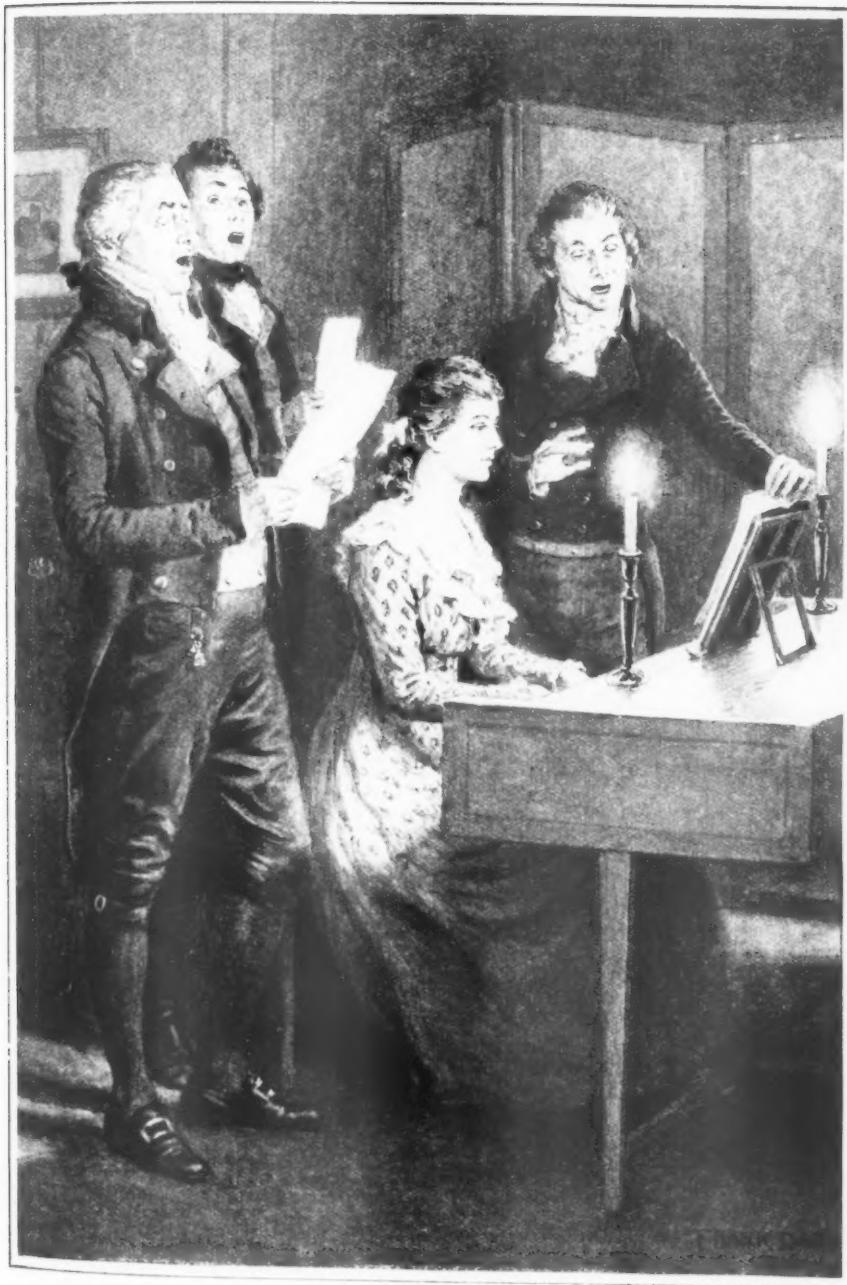
It is hot work to stand before a kitchen range, and in summer should be avoided. But there are self-feeding oil-stoves, complete with ovens, at which a considerable dinner can be prepared. You lighten housework, and save money, by using an oil-stove. I am no expert in the use of gas, but I hear that the heat of a gas-stove is far less severe than that of an ordinary range; and here the town-dweller, who can get gas cheaply enough, has the advantage of the countryman. But the great thing is to avoid the use of coal as much as possible. It is heavy work, dirty work, and expensive work. Oil or gas can produce the same results.

In the perfect house of the future, which will be, of course, a servantless house, the architect will see that hot water is supplied to all the bedrooms from a little coke stove in an outhouse, and will heat all the rooms by means of radiators. For the sake of cheerfulness we will admit a log-fire to the drawing room; but we'll have no coal-scuttle going to and fro. In winter time the kitchen fire may be allowed to roar for the first part of the day; but as we shall all be eating simpler meals for the future, an oil-stove should be used for boiling the tea-kettle and for preparing the evening supper.

In this way, as you will agree, housework, as the servant now knows it and hates it, will cease to exist. It will be work to which a lady may turn her hand with a good courage. And if she brings to this work a little intelligence and a great deal of love, she will find in it a world of new interest and delightful ambitions.

Next month I shall write of this new interest and those delightful ambitions, but for the present I confess that to make a success of the servantless life a very great deal hangs on the character of the house. I do not anticipate a revolution in our social habits until there is a revolution in our architecture.

But I believe this revolution to be at hand. The dearth of servants is driving us towards it, and the increasing power of women will shape that revolution to a wise and happy end.



"Then let
us sing."

Drawn by
Frank Dadd

The Start of the Story

CHAPTER I

LADY WINYARD, rich and unattached, was going out to the French Red Cross to run a private hospital for them, financing it from the foundation. She was taking her favourite niece—Cicely Marsham—with her as a nurse and general accessory. Cicely was an accomplished French scholar, and as beautiful as an English girl can be, so that the invitation was not altogether disinterested.

All the Marshams were poor as church mice, though of a good family. Mr. Marsham had an obscure position in the Home Office; the three sons were in the Army. Ann—the plain one—was staying at home with her mother.

The excitements of parting over, the journey across was safely accomplished, and at last the party reached the château of Cœur la Reine—now a hospital—which was the object of Lady Winyard's solicitations.

CHAPTER II

CICELY quickly made herself at home, and, going through the new empty wards, she met an orderly in uniform.

"I believe you are English," Cicely said, on the spur of the moment.

"I do happen to be a British subject," he conceded; and gave as his reason for being in a French hospital: "*C'est la guerre.*"

However, Cicely discovered that his name was Kane, and that being an Irishman, and with a grievance, he had served under the Foreign Legion in France, was wounded, and now acted as an orderly until fit again for the front.

"There is a real Englishman here," he added. "His name is Steering."

"But how extraordinary!" remarked Cicely. "What is he doing here? Why isn't he in khaki and in the fighting-line?"

Kane shrugged his shoulders.

"That I can't tell. But he is a person with a past—I could swear."

CHAPTER III

ONE morning, two months after they had been established at Cœur la Reine, Lady Winyard decided to go down to Boulogne for the purpose of meeting her car, which had come over from England at last, in charge of Benthall, her chauffeur. While she was away a big convoy arrived, and Cicely and all the others had their work cut out getting the wounded men into the wards. Tired out that night, she

slept fitfully, and in the morning she rose early and made her way to the wood known as Le Bois de la Reine. She was not surprised, on emerging from the trees, to discover Steering. Whilst they were talking they heard the whirr of an aeroplane; then the machine swooped, with a movement of incredible skill and speed, and the next thing something shot down, and Cicely remembered no more.

When she came to herself she was lying in her bed in her own room, with a doctor and a Sister bending over her.

Cicely, it happened, escaped with a bad shaking, but Steering was fatally wounded.

About six o'clock, while she was resting in her aunt's sitting room, there came a knock on the door, and M. Lemoine, the surgeon, appeared.

"I know!" she cried, jumping up. "You have come to tell me that poor Steering is dead!"

"Not yet, mademoiselle; but death is imminent. I am the bearer of a message for you . . . Steering is *in extremis*, mademoiselle, and he desires that you will consent to become his wife before the end." . . .

"Come back to me in a quarter of an hour's time, please," she said.

CHAPTER IV

THE supreme moment had come. The great issue must be decided, and that immediately. Could she take this great step, to humour the whim of a dying man? Finally she sees him. He implores her to accede to this, his last wish, and she consents—if it can be arranged. An English chaplain is sent for, and, after an hour of appalling strain, he comes. Steering was still alive, but perceptibly weaker. In a few moments those interested were gathered round the bedside, and the ceremony was performed.

When the chaplain came to the question, "Who giveth this woman?" Kane stepped forward, saying, "I do."

Not long after, death intervened, and Cicely found herself a widow in name. She knew scarcely anything of her "husband," and, to her astonishment, learnt from the notary that before his death he made a will leaving all he died possessed of to his wife.

"But—but what was his real name? Was it Steering?" she asked the notary.

He turned back to the first page of the document in his hand, and read:

"Giles Henry Deverill, Steering, Steering Hall, and Deverills, in the County of Hertfordshire, third Baron Deverill."



AN ENGLISH ROSE

by

DAVID LYALL

CHAPTER V

The Problem of Changed Relations

LADY WINYARD had immensely enjoyed her trip to Boulogne. She met many notable people, and some familiar ones at the Hotel Cambon, looked up everybody likely to be interesting and useful, and made a trip with Benthall in the car out to Wimereux, to see the friend who was running her own private hospital on the French coast.

It was late afternoon of the second day before she felt at leisure to turn her face towards *Cœur la Reine*.

"I have such a queer feeling, Benthall," said his lady, who was not above talking confidentially, within certain limits, to a servant so eminently devoted and satisfactory.

"Have you, my lady?" he asked solicitously.

"Yes, Benthall. I have the sort of feeling that things have been happening in my absence—a big convoy, probably. I hope it doesn't mean that I have been badly wanted. It would be just like my luck!"

"I hope not, my lady," said Benthall, just swerving a little to get nearer the grateful shade provided by the straight lines of poplars standing like sentinels in the sun. "I

should think they planted these trees, my lady, with a measuring-tape or a foot-rule, and I never did see anything so even."

"One gets rather tired of them. But you will like the hospital; it is very beautiful. And Fouches really is such a pretty little village."

"Shall I have much driving to do, my lady of wounded, for instance?"

"None at all. They come, poor dears, in ambulances, and sometimes by train. The car will be for my exclusive private use, just as it was before. We are miles from anywhere. Besides, one never knows in war-time. Emergencies arise. And it is a delightful run to the coast, where, thank goodness, there are always boats to convey one back to England."

In such desultory talk the miles were quickly and pleasantly covered, and about sundown the Daimler, true to every test, rolled up, with a slow, smooth purr of satisfaction, to the front entrance of *Cœur la Reine*.

Cicely, writing to her father in her aunt's room, which was at the back of the house, with windows looking across the big, wide courtyard towards the woods, did not hear the car, nor any sound of arrival, till her aunt broke into the room.

"There you are, child!" she said, kissing her affectionately. "That's done—and most successfully. What a comfort to be in one's

THE QUIVER

own car again! And Benthall is handsomer and more efficient than ever! I only hope he won't be bored here. Well, what has happened? Heavens, how washed-out you look! They've told me on the stairs about the big convoy; but, of course, everything has settled down beautifully. Matron says there wasn't a single hitch, and that the unloading was a marvel of efficiency and speed, and that M. Lemoine had a good word for everybody. It seems to have taken it out of you, though."

"Oh, no, Aunt Georgie; I'm quite all right!" said Cicely rather weakly, for she suddenly realised that between her and her large, handsome, comfortable aunt there was a great gulf fixed.

Lady Winyard was fond of her niece, and, though she was shallow natured, something warned her that her presentiment in the car had some foundation.

"Tell me instantly what has happened?"

Cicely put up her left hand suddenly to her cheek, and Lady Winyard saw the quaint, little, old-fashioned circlet on her third finger.

"What's that?" she asked sharply, a sudden fear of she knew not what clutching at her heart.

"It's—it's my wedding-ring, Aunt Georgie. That is what has happened to me while you have been away."

"Your what?" almost shrieked Lady Winyard. "You must be crazy! What pranks have you been up to?"

Disjointedly, in short, staccato sentences, Cicely put her aunt in possession of the astonishing facts. Long before she had ceased speaking the elder woman had sunk, helpless, on the stiff settee covered with English chintz, and her face was a study in expression.

"You—you married an orderly on his death-bed simply because he asked you, and you thought it would smooth his dying-pillow, as they say! Heavens on earth! How am I to answer for it to your father? He'll kill me for this!"

Cicely shrugged her shoulders.

"I'm just turned twenty-two, Aunt Georgie—of an age to please myself."

Lady Winyard snorted.

"Was there nobody to prevent this atrocious outrage being perpetrated in my absence? Where was Lemoine? I'll never forgive him for this! But the man is mad—quite mad! They all are! So must you be, Cicely, or you never would have done it. I'm beside myself. And to see you sitting there so calmly, precisely as if nothing had happened! Don't you understand, you little fool? You've ruined your chances and you, with your face, might have made a hundred choices!"

"Oh, Aunt Georgie, don't harp on that!" said Cicely, growing stronger and

calmer as her aunt's serenity became more deranged. "It doesn't matter—he's dead, poor fellow."

"Dead, dead! Thank goodness he is! He might have lived, though, don't you forget it. I've heard of such things happening, and then it was hell for one or other of them. These death-bed affairs are always one-sided. Of course, he was a gentleman—one could see that. I ought to have forbidden you to speak to these men. And yet I trusted you! I thought you could be left to care for yourself. You have never been flighty, but very demure and quiet. Was he—was he, by any chance, a lover of yours, then, Cicely?"

"No—if you mean that we had a love affair, certainly not," said Cicely. And her aunt noted the nice distinction which informed her that there had been love on the orderly's side.

"Who is he, then? Did he ever tell you anything about his family or his people? Do you know *anything* about what you have let yourself in for?"

Cicely, in spite of the acute strain of the situation, could not repress a faint smile as she prepared to reply. She knew her aunt so well, and that a change would come over the spirit of her dream, probably, when she heard the identity of the man who, in her present estimation, had so greatly presumed.

"Tell me quickly, and don't sit there smiling in that aggravating manner. Just think how awful I feel! It is I who will have to bear the brunt of this. Your father will never forgive me."

"I don't think you need trouble about that, Auntie. It had nothing to do with you. I went into it with my eyes open, after considering it for fifteen minutes. That was all the time M. Lemoine would allow me."

"I felt certain it was Lemoine! Oh, I shall certainly kill him!" cried Lady Winyard, as she stamped her daintily shod foot.

"No, no, Auntie. He did not speak a word, good or bad, to influence me. Nobody did. I just simply knew it was the thing I had to do. But it isn't so bad, after all, from the point of view which I know is worrying you most. He was plain Steering, Aunt Georgie, but his real name is Lord Steering; and his place—or places—he seems to have strings of them are in Hertfordshire. Have you ever heard of Steering Hall and Deverills?"

Lady Winyard stared, partly aghast, wholly incredulous. What she heard sounded so altogether impossible and improbable that she wondered whether she had left a sane hospital to return to one in the possession of lunatics.

"Steering! Deverill! Why, yes, I've



"Cleely put up her left hand suddenly to her cheek, and Lady Winyard saw the quaint old-fashioned circlet on her third finger."¹¹

Drawn by
Stanley Washburn

THE QUIVER

seen the places. They are not on our side of the county. But, of course, they're in Debrett. I suppose it wouldn't be possible to get a Debrett in the war zone? I remember now—a Deverill married a Steering somewhere in the last century, and the estates were amalgamated. Why, then, it might have been worse!"

Her plump white hands, of which she took such exceeding care, and which she thought were improved by the banishment of gems from her fingers, folded themselves, with a little complacent pat, on her knee.

"Have you seen all his papers and things? Of course, they're yours now, and you have the right to take possession and thoroughly overhaul them. I'll help you. Then something must be concocted for his people. It won't be necessary to tell them the whole story; it would sound so foolish, and perhaps prejudice them. Why do you look like that, Cicely? It surely isn't a thing to laugh at, regarded from our point of view. I'm shocked at you!"

It was only a somewhat wan and tremulous smile which flitted across the girl's strained face. The sudden change of front, from the accuser whose class instincts and pride were threatened to the complacent woman of the world who beholds possible good come out of evil, was so characteristic of her aunt that the girl's sense of humour could not but be touched.

"I'm not laughing, Aunt Georgie; yet it is funny when you come to think of it. But I don't feel as if I had the least right to pry into his papers. He was nearly a stranger to me."

"My dear, you can't help yourself. You're in it now, the same as we are in the war; and you'll have to get through it with the most credit and advantage to yourself, precisely the same as we shall have to get out of this war," said Lady Winyard. Presently she put a question which caused the colour to deepen in the girl's cheeks.

"Can't that queer friend of his—Kane—throw any light on it? Was he there when the ceremony took place?"

"Yes, Auntie, he was."

"Well? I'm waiting," suggested Lady Winyard, with a slightly more incisive note in her voice. "Have you had any talk with him?"

"Yes, I have," answered Cicely, conscious that there could be no escape for her from this strict cross-examination. "I was trying to recall what he did say. It isn't easy, somehow. It has become difficult, all in a moment, to talk about it. Kane thinks that poor Steering had some idea of making reparation to his family by leaving a wife behind, whom they would be glad to welcome."

"Sounds like a kind of conspiracy between

two very shady gentlemen," said Lady Winyard quietly. "I think I had better interview Kane, and try and worm all he knows out of him."

Again the smile flickered about the girl's dry lips, as she tried to picture that silent, inscrutable person under her aunt's cross-examination. She imagined that Kane would come out of it with the advantage on his side.

"I don't think he really knows very much. They only met in the Legion."

"The Legion? Have they been fighting in the Foreign Legion?" Lady Winyard asked in accents of the strongest surprise.

"I believe so—indeed, I know, because they have both told me."

"Then, depend—depend on it, both have something to hide. The Foreign Legion is the last desperate avenue in which a gentleman may retrieve his honour, if not his fortunes. To most of them it merely provides a decent grave. I shall certainly interview Kane after dinner. You needn't shake your head, child. I'm your guardian at the moment, and it is my duty to make every inquiry, and try to safeguard the situation and you. Left to yourself, Heaven only knows what you would be likely to do!"

"I shouldn't do anything at all, Auntie, but go on precisely as if nothing had happened."

"Ah, but that is quite impossible! If we do certain things we have to take and abide by their consequences. If you really are Lady Steering, then you can't go on being a V.A.D. here, unknown to all whom it concerns."

"It concerns only me and the poor dead man at the moment," said Cicely mournfully.

"That is only true in a limited sense," observed Lady Winyard. "Unfortunately, none of us can live to ourselves. Besides, no doubt they are in frightful anxiety at Steering Hall, or Deverills, or wherever it is they live. We must consult together, and then his people must be written to. But, first of all, I must see Kane."

"I've been writing to daddy, Auntie. What had I better do with the letter? I can't finish it to-night."

"There is no hurry about your people, my dear. They're all right. I'm glad you mentioned that you had been writing to him for, as I said before, he'll hold me responsible, and your father is not a nice man when really roused, Cicely. The Marsham temper is not a very pleasant obstacle to get up against."

"I've never seen father show the Marsham temper."

"I have. Once he was very angry with me, and I've never forgotten it. And he would certainly say I ought to have looked

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after you better. Well, it is seven o'clock, and I am positively famishing of hunger; and I know Matron is waiting with oceans of things to tell me. After dinner, Cicely, I'll send a message for Kane, and try and get to the bottom of this strange story. Only for your sake, child, and nothing else. Heaven knows we've all faults enough, and I should be only too glad to bury poor Steering without raking up his past; but, after all, in England still we owe something to family."

With that majestic utterance, Lady Win-yard passed into the bedroom beyond to remove her bonnet.

Cicely gathered up her writing materials and went into her own room, which was quite close at hand, in the same corridor.

No sooner was she inside the door than the things she carried fell from her nerveless hands, and, feeling weak and spent, she threw herself on the still unmade bed, and gave way to a burst of almost hysterical sobbing.

CHAPTER VI

Miss Caroline Chieveley

MISS CAROLINE CHIEVELEY, from the Manor of Deverills, walked down the village street of Much Havers in the drowsy sunshine of a May afternoon.

Summer had come with a rush to England, after a long, cold spring, and the lanes and gardens and hedgerows were a wonder of beauty, the air scented with the sweetest of all perfumes—those which Dame Nature provides.

Much Havers was a typically English village, such as one can see any day within a ten-mile radius of London. It, however, was a good five-and-twenty miles from the heart of things, and not easy of access, its nearest station being Verhamsted, on the Great Northern line, three miles distant.

Much Havers had not much use for a railway station, since it had no commerce requiring transit facilities, and the few travelling passengers were so seldom in a hurry that they did not dream of complaining about the three-mile walk to the station. There was a fly obtainable at a high price, and for the favoured few an occasional drive could be obtained in the postcart. But since the war opened that had been dispensed with, because the postman had enlisted, and the bags were now fetched to and from the station on a tricycle.

Miss Chieveley was a large, masculine person, with a somewhat forbidding cast of countenance and a slight suspicion of a moustache. She was held in wholesome awe by the villagers, whom she ruled

with a rod of iron, for their ultimate good.

The gates of Deverills opened on the roadway, just at the top of the village street, and the church and rectory were close by, so that there was literally no escape for the villagers from active supervision. Most of them, however, did not resent it. It had always been so, and always would be so, and the children still curtsied to their betters, and the little ones from Dame Deverill's Old Foundation School still wore red flannel capes, and horrid little round black hats with a red band, and sat in a demure row in the two front pews before the altar rails.

Deverills marched with Steering Hall, which was the principal seat (as the guide-books had it) of the Chieveley family. The guide-book also explained how the two estates had been amalgamated by marriage, in the end of the eighteenth century, between Giles Chieveley, first Baron Steering, and Margaret Deverill, daughter of Christopher Deverill of Deverills Manor.

They were very old families both, and once upon a time had been rich and powerful.

Miss Chieveley, then, was a tall and commanding figure in an extremely short coat and skirt of homespun tweed, a striped silk shirt, and a round, unbecoming straw hat with a straight brim and a somewhat aggressive quill set at the wrong angle. None of the Deverill women had ever known how to buy or put on their clothes, and had of late years been too poor to pay anybody to tell them how to do it.

She walked manfully, supported by a shepherd's crook, and two spaniels ran at her heels. She had come down in the heat of the afternoon to get the second post, which was not delivered until the evening.

There was a postmistress in Much Havers—one Fanny Killick, the widow of a former bailiff at Deverills, and in her early years a housemaid in that august establishment. It was sadly thinned now, and the family dignity was sustained and upheld by three maidservants and Godley, Lady Steering's maid.

Mrs. Killick was behind the counter, with her back to it, sorting out the letters, when Miss Chieveley's rather large shadow darkened the doorway. Mrs. Killick had been deeply and personally interested in a large square envelope of thin, foreign-looking stationery, addressed in a flourishing, stylish handwriting to Lady Steering, Steering Hall, Much Havers, Hertfordshire, England. The address evidently had been written by one not immediately

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familiar with the Chievely affairs. No Steering had lived at Steering Hall for many years; it was now merely the residence of the bailiff who managed the home farm.

"Afternoon, Fanny," said Miss Chievely, who never dreamed of allowing her former dependent the dignity of her married title. "Very warm to-day. Heavy mail, I see. I suppose you are getting more and more letters from the front for the village folks, aren't you?"

"A goodish few, miss," answered Mrs. Killick, with some slight signs of perturbation, as she turned round to meet the eagle eye of Miss Chievely. "Here's one for her ladyship, miss, from France."

Miss Chievely stretched out an eager, even a curious hand, and carefully scanned the writing on the envelope, likewise the pink stamp "Passed by Censor."

"I don't know who this can be from, Fanny."

It was a lady's handwriting, and, further, had a very pronounced crest in red—the war colour—on the flap. The worst of taste, Miss Chievely inwardly pronounced it, yet it whetted her curiosity. Who could be writing to her mother from France? And what was the letter about?

"Very probably the matron of some hospital, or one of the voluntary workers swarming in France, writing about one of our own men here," she decided, speaking her thoughts out loud for the intentional delectation of the postmistress, who was still sorting letters, etc.

"'Ere's some more, miss all from France," said Mrs. Killick, handing over a bulky package, and likewise another smaller letter.

The effect of the latter was very marked on Miss Chievely. She coloured up and then went quite pale, and walked out of the post office rather hurriedly for her.

Without looking either to the right or to the left, she returned to the high end of the village street, and entered the Deverill's grounds by a wicket close to the churchyard. All the Deverills were buried in that old churchyard, in a large, square enclosure, adorned by strange old stone tombs whose tablets set forth their various virtues and achievements.

Miss Chievely sat down on the broad stone balustrade which surrounded it, and after handling the small foreign letter for several indecisive minutes, slit the envelope with the silver knife attached to her workmanlike chatelaine.

She recognised the handwriting as her brother's, and though it was addressed to her mother, she felt herself perfectly justified in opening it. Now, Caroline Chievely, hard to the world, had one complete object of adoration, and that was the trait and

gentle mother over whom she watched and cared for with a protecting, almost a motherly, love. She knew—none better—how the ne'er-do-well, who had brought much sorrow and shame to Deverills and to the name he bore, and who had finally disappeared into the unknown, had wrung her mother's heart and whitened her hair and set deep circles under the sweetest eyes in the world.

And so she took it upon herself to open that letter which had come suddenly out of the void, and with full determination that if it contained anything of a wounded character she would suppress all knowledge of its arrival. Exciting events did not chase each other towards Much Havers, and though Caroline was strong, she was conscious of an inward flutter of the heart, which communicated itself to the firm hand which held the open sheet. It was quite a long letter, and ran as follows:

"Cœur la Reine,
"Fouches,
"France.
"April 30th.

"**MY DARLING MOTHER,**—The day has come for me to write to you, and I know from it as Tommy says—that my number is up. It is not possible for me to tell you here all that has befallen me since that awful day we parted in the dawn at Deverills, and I looked back to see your white face at the window.

"The record of these years is not so black as might be painted. At least I have done nothing to add to the sum of the shortcomings which drove me from England; and I have been fifteen years in the Foreign Legion, fighting in puny frontier wars for France, and meeting many good fellows, most of them driven into the wilderness through their own sins or the cruelty of others.

"At the moment of writing I'm in hospital, a partial crook, after wounds received in some of the Legion's worst fighting. Last winter I had hoped to go back, but somehow I think I will not now. I don't ask your forgiveness for all the misery I caused. Mothers don't need these prayers. They forgive because that is why they live—to suffer and endure and hold on to the end.

"Through you, remembering your divine heart, I have never feared death, but will go with a smile to my Maker, and take what recompense He appoints. I have the feeling that, through your prayers, there will be another chance for me on the other side. I don't take it at my right, dearest; and don't think I am not sorry, or that I have never longed for the good life of an English gentleman in his own place, and

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"Here's some more, miss—all from France," said Mrs. Kitlick."

*Drawn by
Stanley Dart.*

where he had earned the approval of his own conscience, and his neighbours' kindly smiles.

"Heavens! I have longed for that, with a longing beside which the pangs of hell will seem as nothing. I somehow think I am going to make some atonement to you at the last, and that it will follow hard on this.

"I want to tell you that since I have been here in France two influences have been at work for my regeneration. One is the affection and loyalty of a good comrade, as fine a one as ever man had. We have fought in the Legion together, and we both won the Croix de Guerre when we made a last stand together in a ghastly ditch on the Meuse front. His name is Dennis Kane, and if you meet him—as you will, for sure—show him what a real mother can be like. He has never had one; his mother died when he was born.

"The other influence is a girl, who came to this hospital with her aunt. She is a sweet English rose, who reminded me of Joyce at first, though she has courage

and is not afraid to tell a man the truth about himself. If I had met her earlier, mother—But there! What is the use?

"Something tells me you will meet her one day. These two—Dennis Kane and Cisely Marsham have together lifted my soul from a miry place and set it once more on the rock.

"God bless you, mother! The wayward boy, who had the misfortune to have all the bad blood of his race in his veins without the courage to fight it, is not afraid of what lies ahead. He has proven himself a man at the last. But, though fighting for France, his heart is in England, and his spirit will haunt the lanes and woods of Deverills who knows?—clean and pure and holy, as it was in the days when it nestled in the hollow of your hand.

"*GILES.*"

A strange change came over the face of Caroline Chievely as she read, with eyes which seemed to shrink more every moment, that most poignant human document. She was aware now that it was a breach of faith

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to have opened it, and she did not know how to explain it away.

Giles Chievely had not thought much—if at all—about his sister Caroline while he penned that letter; they had never been chums, and she had spoken many bitter words to him while he was dragging their name in the dust; but he certainly had no thought that his written words, like a two-edged sword, would stab his sister to the heart.

She sat there a long time, the tears making channels on her hard face, her strong mouth working, her heart a complete turmoil of strange passions and unavailing regrets. She seemed to grasp in that hour, for the first time, what life really is for some souls—what a tremendous struggle against odds from the cradle to the grave.

The plea which sank deepest was embodied in the words: ". . . the boy who had the misfortune to have all the bad blood of his race in his veins without the courage to fight it."

She never had understood, had never been tolerant or pitiful, or even sisterly, in any degree to the brother whose name was never now mentioned in the house. She had even, in a fit of righteous anger, turned his picture to the wall in the long gallery at Deverills, but had made haste to right it when she saw the look on her mother's face.

"God forgive me!" she said under her breath. "Some day I'll ask Giles to forgive me, too. It won't be easy, for the Deverills don't admit themselves in the wrong; but it will have to be done—and I'll do it."

Yet, when she rose, her fingers gripping the other letters, an unutterable fear shook her. Apparently he had written the letter while able enough for the effort. What, then, did the others contain?

She looked at them longingly, but she had had enough. And something told her that her mother, though frail and shrinking in the ordinary affairs of life, would without difficulty find the courage needed for this supreme test.

But she walked very slowly through the wicket and across the sweet woodland ways to the house, conscious for the first time of her five-and-thirty years. She was the eldest of the family, and had often longed to be a man, feeling herself so fit and capable of upholding the dignity and prestige of the house. She had, indeed, girded against Providence for His lack of foresight, and for the injustice that had made her an old maid, a person of very little importance so far as the things that mattered were concerned.

She came slowly to the beautiful old house, regarding it with new eyes as she approached it. It was not the cradle of

the Chievelys, but in that house her mother had been born, and Caroline, too, had first seen the light.

Many vicissitudes had torn and harrowed it, but it was hallowed by all the associations of family life, handed on from father to son. Even Giles, the wanderer and the prodigal, had never been able to cut himself off.

It lay very quiet and still in the drowsy sunshine, and when she entered the hall there was not a sound to be heard anywhere. She looked at the old English chiming clock standing above the carved-stone fireplace. It was just twenty minutes past four. In ten minutes tea would be served in her mother's sitting-room. She decided that she would wait till her mother had had a cup.

She felt glad that Joyce, who had come over from her work at a hospital for wounded officers, had returned to her post of duty. She had parted from her at the gate on the way to the village, and had watched her ride off on her bicycle, so there would be none to intervene.

As she set down her walking-stick, and took off her hat from her short grey hair, which waved not unbecomingly about her strong face, Lewis, the parlourmaid, came through the swing door with the teatray.

There were no menservants now in the house of Deverills, and very few women. The staff had been reduced to the smallest possible limit, and only within the last few weeks they had discussed the advisability of trying to let the house, and retire either to a London flat, or a smaller house, to be obtained cheaply in some remote village or seaside place. But they had shrunk from that final assault of fate, and Caroline had opposed it entirely on account of her mother's health.

"Has mother come out of her room yet, Lewis?" asked Miss Chievely, and her voice was so low and subdued that involuntarily the girl cast an inquiring look at her.

"Yes, miss. Godley has just come down for her own tea."

"Oh, all right. Take ours up now. No, there is nothing here for you, Lewis. I'm sorry."

Lewis had a sweetheart and two brothers at the front, and lived entirely for the arrival of the mails.

Lewis sniffed, for she had had no letter from her boy for ten days, and was now convinced that he was killed, wounded, or missing, and that the War Office was purposely keeping her in the dark. She carried up the tray rather unsteadily, but managed, however, to take in everything that was required, and it was not until she had finally disappeared that Caroline, taking her courage in both hands, ascended to her mother's room.

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CHAPTER VII

Lady Steering

THE large, aggressive, managing woman may command attention in a limited area, but it is the small woman who rules the world.

Lady Steering, not more than five feet four inches in height, with a slim, fragile figure and a very quiet, almost a deprecating manner, had ruled autocratically in her husband's heart and in the house of Derverills all her life. Even her eldest daughter, not easily abashed, stood in awe of certain of her moods.

Her delicate colouring, unimpaired after sixty-two years of life rather more charged with sorrow and anxiety than falls to the common lot, her sweet, sensitive mouth, her delicate grace, were typical of the things men are willing to die for.

She was knitting busily, having found her war *métier* in providing comforts required for soldiers. She had some relatives—distant, it is true—and many friends in the fighting areas, and her parcels were always welcome, because they were chosen and packed with so much consideration and wisdom, and invariably contained exactly what their recipients had been sighing for.

Her smile, as she looked up to greet Caroline's entrance, was sweet and ruffled, as usual, and she did not, in that cursory glance, observe anything unusual in her daughter's expression.

"Have you had a nice walk, dear?" she asked. "I'm afraid Joyce would find it hot cycling back. She looked so flushed when she came in, poor child. I was quite sorry to see her."

"Oh, Joyce doesn't mind the cycling in the least. I only wish I were half a head smaller—I'd follow suit. But I haven't yet seen the bicycle I would trust myself on."

A little humorous light crept into Lady Steering's eyes.

"You are such a splendid walker, dear, and have the advantage of short creatures like Joyce and me."

"All the same, I could have dispensed with the last two inches, Mother," was Caroline's good-humoured retort, as she sat down at the tea-table. "For one thing, one could buy stock clothes, which would be a distinct economy in war-time."

Lady Steering gave her shoulders a little shrug. She had many of the fixed ideas of her class, and ready-made clothes did not enter into her scheme of things. She could wear, and, as a matter of fact, had worn shabby clothes most of her life, but they had always borne the *cachet* of their origin from first to last.

They did not hurry over tea, and Lady Steering, waited on assiduously by her daughter, made not the smallest inquiry

concerning Caroline's visit to the post office. As no letters had been offered, she concluded that none had come.

At last Caroline rose and rang the bell for the tea tray to be removed. When they were alone again she, feeling unaccountably nervous, said quite abruptly:

"Mother, something has happened. A lot of letters came from France this afternoon."

"Letters—for me, do you mean?" asked her mother, looking up with a mild surprise. "What kind of letters?"

"One from Giles—I opened it, darling. I suppose I ought not; but I was so afraid in case it might contain something that would hurt you. You understand—don't you, dear?"

It was rather pathetic to see the tall, capable-looking woman bending so humbly towards the little one, not in the least sure how her attitude would be interpreted. Her mother, with no sign of haste or perturbation, except that her hands trembled a little on her soft knitting as she laid it down on the small table by her side.

"A letter from Giles! Where is it?"

Her voice had a strange, far-away ring, and her face somehow had changed. As Caroline stood a little apart, glancing occasionally at the face bent so intently over the precious missive that had suddenly been hurled out of the unknown, she realised, with an odd sense of bitterness, that the writer of that letter was the only real factor in her mother's life. She had borne the incredible sorrows he had heaped up for her with a dignity which nothing could break or shake, but her first-born and only son represented the pivot of her existence, and his sisters did not count.

Well, it added but one more item to the sum of life's injustice, and Caroline, though not a student of the Bible, suddenly reflected on how faithful a picture was presented in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Her mother neither moved nor spoke as, through her gold pince-nez, she read every word of the closely written sheet. When she had finished she began again and re-read it through. Then she said, quite quietly:

"God answers prayer, Caroline, after all. May He forgive me for having doubted it. He will bring your brother back to Derverills, and we shall lift up our heads again."

The words stabbed Caroline, for she had no such expectation. She had taken her brother's letter as a farewell message, and believed, though she had as yet no proof of it, that he was already dead.

"I am so thankful it has come, Mother," she said softly. "Here are some other letters, which may, perhaps, throw some light on his."

She took up a quaint silver paper-knife with a twisted handle from the writing-table, and slit the envelope bearing the red

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crest. Her mother stretched out her hand with the same eagerness; and before she had read many lines gave a little cry, and her head fell forward, while the sweet pink colour died out of her cheeks, leaving them wan and grey.

"I was premature—my boy is dead, Caroline! Oh, I think it is harder after reading his letter! It was better before—one could always hope, and now everything is over!"

She permitted the letter to flutter from her fingers to the floor, and leaned back, covering her face with her lawn handkerchief.

Caroline brought her vinaigrette, with which the Victorian woman always fortified herself in moments of weakness, but her mother waved her aside.

"Just a moment, my dear. I shall get my courage back——"

But a little moan succeeded her words, and it seemed a long time to Caroline, standing awkwardly by, her big heart full of sympathy, which she did not know how to express, until her mother regained the wonderful self-control which had helped her through so many dreary days at Deverills.

"I think you may read out the letter to me now. No, not Giles's letter—the one I threw away. It is from some woman in the hospital where he was. Let me hear what she has to say about him."

Caroline, eagerly enough, began to read the diplomatic epistle which Lady Winyard had concocted in her sitting-room at *Cœur la Reine*.

DEAR LADY STEERING, I have a somewhat heavy and difficult task before me, but that is so common an experience in war-time that one need not dwell unnecessarily on it.

"I came here in February last to run this hospital for the French Red Cross, and among our hospital orderlies was one calling himself Mr. Steering, whom we now know to be Lord Steering, your son. He had been wounded on the Meuse front, fighting with the French Foreign Legion, and remained here as orderly until he could be passed once more fit for active service. His death was owing to a bomb from a hostile aircraft which passed over us yesterday.

"I have a niece here with me my brother's child, Cicely Marsham; one of the Lesterford Marshams no doubt you have heard the name. Your son fell in love with her, and at his request, and in my absence at Boulogne on urgent business connected with the hospital (I hope you will observe my absence, for, as her present guardian, I should not have given my consent), he persuaded her to marry him on his death-bed. The poor girl, bewildered, and urged to this extraordinary sacrifice by those who, perhaps, ought to have known better, consented, and the

ceremony was performed by a chaplain from the nearest British camp. I am assured it is quite legal, though I had my doubts. My niece, of course, remains with me, and I have not yet had the courage to inform her father.

"I have no hesitation in writing to you, because I am sure you will be glad to have definite news of your son, whom, I understand, you had lost sight of for some years. I shall hope to hear from you in due course, and with every sentiment of regret and condolence, believe me, yours sincerely,

"GEORGINA MARSHAM WINYARD."

"It is an impertinent letter, Caroline!" said Lady Steering, who, as she listened, appeared to have gathered all her scattered forces, and was now able to grasp even the finer shades of these strange happenings with a nicety which amazed Caroline. "It could only have been written by a woman who has very little niceness of feeling. It is a sort of defiance. Don't you see she is really anxious and a little conscience-stricken? No doubt they knew all about your poor brother, and engineered the marriage beforehand. Indeed, it is obvious on the face of it. A hospital orderly—poor Giles! What is in the other letter, Caroline?"

Once more the little paper-knife came into requisition, and from the inner package came sundry legal-looking documents, also a letter written in another hand.

"Someone else seems to have a finger in the pie, mother," said Caroline, with a kind of cheerful curiosity. Now that her mother had recovered from the immediate shock the whole affair was assuming an interest most acute, and very welcome as a break in the undoubted monotony of Caroline's present days.

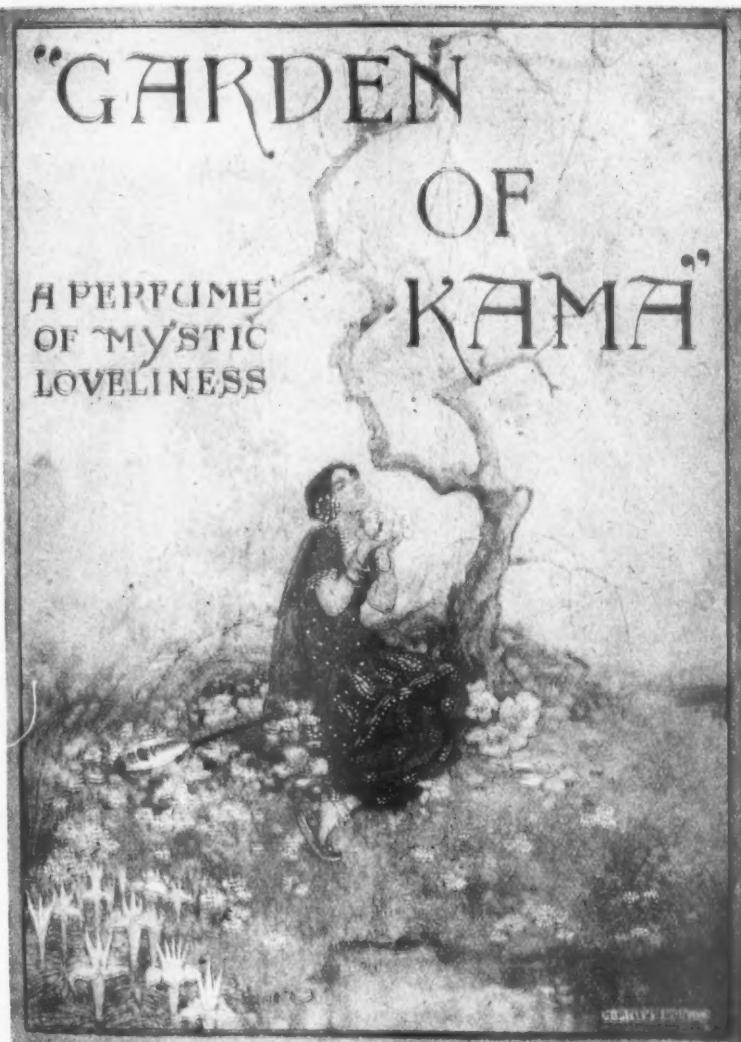
Dennis Kane had written very shortly, but managed to say more than Lady Winyard, and to throw further light on the extraordinary affair at *Cœur la Reine*.

"**MADAM,**" he began, too retiring and modest to address the mother of his dead friend as Lady Steering, "I feel it to be my duty and privilege to send you a few lines about your son, who was my friend and comrade.

"Indeed, he asked me to write, while he was able to speak, and to assure you that he died without any qualms or fears, trusting in the mercy of the God of whom he learned at your knee. These are his words. I feel that it is almost an impertinence to add to them, but I should like to say that never had man better friend or true comrade.

"We met first in Paris, and we have been together, side by side, fighting for Liberty, in the Foreign Legion, where his name will

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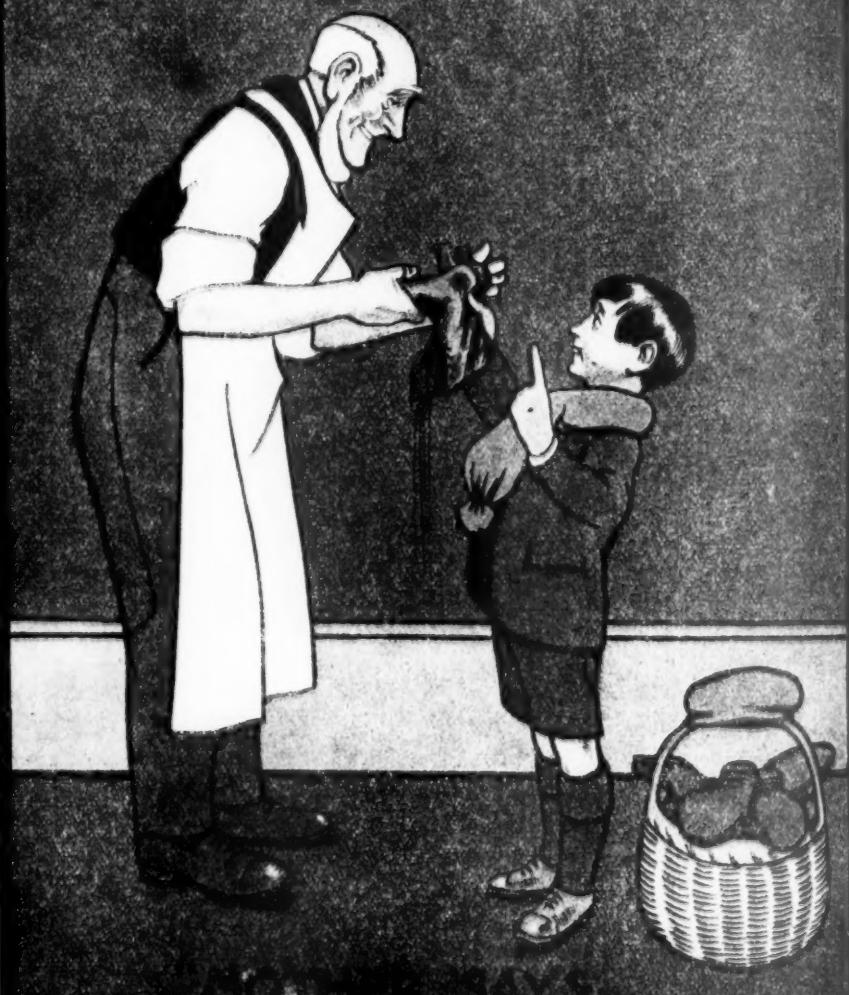
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be remembered among many who have given deathless lives for France.

"I should like to add, if it will not be considered an intrusion, that though he fought and died for France, his heart was in England, and he cherished the hope that he would be able to come back one day to atone (these were his words, madam) for the feebleness of his service to his native land.

"Of you he spoke sometimes—at the bivouac, in the dying light of the camp fire, or the black darkness of the front line trenches—as men speak of what is holy and enshrined in their hearts. Through him I learned to believe in, and to understand, what I had missed, because I had no mother. I hope that you will be comforted. It is easy to take the name of God on one's lips—it is such as you who keep alive faith in Him in an impossible world.

"Yours respectfully,
"DENNIS KANE."

Both these women, though so different in faith and feeling, were immensely moved by these lines.

Lady Steering read his letter over again, and handed it to Caroline, with the remark: "That is an extraordinary letter, Caroline. But he understood my son. We must meet."

"Dennis Kane—if it is his real name—he is Irish, and a revolutionary, Mother," said Caroline, who drove things to the ultimate conclusion, and could not rest till everything was explained, tabulated, set in its proper category.

"The name is of no consequence. It is a common name—possibly it is an assumed one."

"But he's been well educated, Mother. His writing is peculiar, but he writes like a poet! How strikingly he expresses himself! But you notice he does not say anything about this person who claims to be Giles's wife. Shall I look up the Marshams, Mother?"

Lady Steering said neither yea nor nay; her thoughts were with the past, and the extraordinary volume of communication which had been hurled at her from the void had quite obviously shaken her natural calm. For the first time there appeared on her face and in her bearing actual signs of her sixty-two years. Caroline flew down to the library, and a few minutes later returned with the necessary information.

"They seem all right, Mother. Marshams of Lesterford Park, Lesterford. But none of them appear to live there now, and it has passed to people called Dobbs. Well, what is going to happen? Shall we wire or write to all these people? What can I do first to help?"

"There isn't anything to be done except

to go to France," said her mother. "I shall go immediately."

"Mother, it isn't possible!" she cried shrilly. "You have not been away from Deverills for years."

"No, of course not. I remained here lest at any moment my boy should come back and not find me here. Now he will not return to me; but I can go to him."

"But, Mother, what is the good? He will—he will be buried before we get there."

"I understand that. But surely you know that his dear body must come home and be buried beside his father. No Chevely, except your great-uncle, the Admiral, who died at sea, has ever been buried away from Steering."

"But, Mother, there is a war. I don't believe you will even get a passport."

Lady Steering smiled.

"These things can be managed. I think I may just have a little influence yet in high quarters."

"Not with this Government in power, Mother. It's all topsy-turvy. If you were plain Mrs. Steering from Nowhere you might have a chance, but not now."

"There are ways, you will see. Besides, don't you see it is necessary that I should see this girl—or woman—who claims to be my son's wife? Nothing can be done by correspondence. There are circumstances in which letters are necessary; but their business is to complicate life, never to clear it. I shall go to-morrow to the Foreign Office, and lay the facts before them. If possible, I shall cross to Boulogne by the night boat."

"Boats don't run by schedule or timetable any more, Mother," murmured Caroline out of the depths of her astonishment. "You go when you can. I don't think you are really able for this journey. Wouldn't you trust me, Mother? I am very strong and capable, and my French is good enough for everyday purposes. I would do everything—and love doing it."

Her mother very gently shook her head.

"You don't understand. No one can do this except myself. But you could come with me if you like. I could dispense with Godley. She would be quite useless, anyhow, in a foreign country. We shall do the necessary packing to-night, go to London by the early train to-morrow, and simply stay there at Brown's Hotel until we get the permit to cross to France."

She rose from her chair as she spoke, folded up her knitting, and looked calmly at Caroline—a transformed creature, no longer needing sheltering care, or rest, or inaction, but ready for every emergency.

"Mother, you are a marvel!" said Caroline. "And I don't know where I am!"

[END OF CHAPTER SEVEN]



"O man! hold thee on in courage of soul
Through the stormy shades of this worldly way,
And the billows of cloud that around thee roll
Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day."

SHELLEY.

DEAR ARMY OF HELPERS,—
I left you last month just when I was about to see the men at work at St. Dunstan's. The first room into which my guide led me was given up to typing and Braille reading. Numbers of men were seated at typewriters, learning from instructors how to typewrite, and others were being taught Braille reading—that is, as you know, reading from raised letters which the blind men touch. They are taught by voluntary teachers, who come in all weathers the whole year round to teach the arts of reading and writing with the greatest interest and cheerfulness to the blinded men.

"You would not believe how quickly the men learn typewriting," said my guide. "Some of them have never seen, and now will never see a typewriter—coal miners, for instance, who have been engaged on heavy manual work all their lives—and yet in a short time they can type quite well. We don't teach typing as an occupation except to those who are learning shorthand, but just to keep the men in touch with their friends by correspondence."

I learnt that the handwriting of a blind person nearly always deteriorates, and sometimes it deteriorates very quickly. It is therefore a great thing that he should be able to typewrite.

As soon as a man has passed the St. Dunstan's test—that is, when he can write a long business letter and type a page of descriptive matter at a fair rate without a mistake—he is given a typewriter for "his very own." And when they leave St. Dunstan's the men are provided with Braille books. The Committee of the National Library for the Blind lend books free for life to all members of H.M. forces blinded in the war. And the National Institute for the Blind pays the postage on them.

Practically every man learns netting as well as Braille reading and typing.

Hammocks and Rabbit Nets

In the next room we found the "netters" at work. Netting is not taught as a means of earning a livelihood, but as a pleasant way of spending spare hours in work which can be sold for a few shillings. Men sit with their netting at the concerts and other entertainments at St. Dunstan's—as women might sit with knitting.

I thought the netting turned out by the men was most attractive. There were beautiful hammocks for the garden—there were very nice knitting bags made of coloured string, and there were rabbit nets so useful for farmers.

I spoke to two of the men who were netting—both quite young men, not much over twenty. One of them was a very cheerful youth, who was whistling over his work. He had nearly finished his first hammock, and he was very proud of it. I told

"THE QUIVER" ARMY OF HELPERS

him I would tell THE QUIVER readers about it. "That's good," he said.

The other young soldier had just finished his first rabbit net. He told me that a farmer in Monmouthshire had sent an order, and he was delighted to be working at it.

"The more they want, the better for us," he said.

He was an exceptionally nice boy, and told me with great delight of rowing on the lake.

"It's splendid," he said, smiling.

He had a charming face, and I was so glad to see it light up with a smile. The cheerfulness and the pluck of the men is marvellous, but on every face there are the traces of the terrible struggle they have gone through, and they do not all whistle and sing.

The Most Cheerful Room of All

The most cheerful workroom seemed to me to be the boot repairing room. Cobblers are trained in great numbers at St. Dunstan's, and excellent work they turn out.

"Cobbler, cobbler, mend my shoe,
Get it done by half past two!"

Tang in my ears, as I watched the busy hands at work, and heard the various "*thump thumps*" and the men whistling and singing so cheerily. The cobblers all learn mat-making as well, so that they can have a change of work. When they leave St. Dunstan's they set up as cobblers in their own towns and villages, and find plenty of work to do.

In the same room as the cobbling and mat-making you can see basket making and carpentering, and really beautiful work is turned out. I secured a most attractive paper basket, and I was also tempted by a beautiful work-basket. The carpenters

had just finished some very well-made wooden trays, and I simply longed for a big dog that I might buy a wonderful kennel that one of the men had made. In fact, all the work would have won high praise if it had been turned out by those who could see, instead of by men who could only rely on the sense of touch.

I must hold over till next month my account of the other occupations taught at St. Dunstan's. Meanwhile, I venture to hope that each member of the Army of Helpers will send a little Christmas offering—every sum from a few pence upwards will be welcome—to help that gallant sightless little army of men who have fought and suffered for us.

Several Welcome Letters

The post has brought me some very pleasant letters, and before I go on to those "odd jobs" which I have been suggesting for those who are looking out for



Learning the Intricacies of Braille.

war work, I must thank one and all who have given me a hearty welcome. It is most encouraging, and the nervous about-to-make-a-speech feeling I told you about in my first chat is beginning to disappear. I feel we shall become a very happy friendly band of workers, and I hope we shall achieve something really substantial. I

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must quote from a very nice letter from Phyllis Brissenden (Folkestone), who says :

"Welcome to our happy hunting ground! We have just received the September QUIVER, and as I am one of the oldest Companions—as far as length of service is concerned—I'd love to be one of the first to say, 'Three cheers for Mrs. Lock!' I am very anxious to see what you have to say to us in next month's QUIVER."

I was also very glad to receive a letter from Sub-Lieut. Henry Davies, R.N.R.:

"As I see in this month's QUIVER that you have taken 'Alison's' place, I thought I might write to you as I used often to 'Alison.' I am a member, and would always be glad to help in any way."

And I am enrolling several new members for the Army of Helpers. Please note that I am discontinuing the coupon and the certificate. All you need do, if you wish to join the Army of Helpers, is to send in your names. All those who already belong to the L.Y.B.C. can be members of the Army of Helpers without enrolling again.

I was very pleased to welcome Roma Howland (Cardiff). She writes :

"I should love to become a member. We have taken in THE QUIVER ever since I can remember. I am 13. I am extremely fond of drawing, and so I am going in for the drawing competition in this month's QUIVER."

And I am delighted to hear of the work that is being done at Cowdenbeath. Mary Leishman writes from there :

"A few of us in Cowdenbeath are working together to help the Funds. Give my best love to all Helpers."

You know that we require £20 per annum to support Philip at the Homes for Little Boys at Farningham. We have paid for him for the current half-year, but we need help for the next six months.

Odd Jobs for Helpers

There are so many odd jobs nowadays in which anyone can lend a hand, and they all help to win the war. They may sound trivial, but it is many small things that make up a big whole, and there is no one too old or weak or too young or too poor to do *nothing*.

The Silver Thimble Fund

The Silver Thimble Fund (organised by Lady Maud Wilbraham and Miss Hope Clarke) has raised over £23,000 for War Funds by the collection of old silver thimbles and oddments of all descriptions—mount-

ings of umbrellas and pipes, brooches, coins, chains, watches. The collection is for motor ambulances at present. Please send any silver trinket you can spare—nothing is too small to be melted down; or, if saleable, the gifts are sold to the best advantage.

Old Gloves and Fur

Old kid or *suede* gloves and bits of fur are needed for the Glove Waistcoat Fund (organised by Miss Cox and Miss Stokes) for making leather windproof waistcoats and fur gloves for our soldiers and sailors. The fur gloves are especially appreciated by the mine-sweepers.

Coloured Pictures and Scraps

I should be glad of coloured pictures and scraps (they must be new and clean) for those who are making scrap-books for our wounded men in Hospital. These books are greatly appreciated by those who are too ill to read, and also by convalescents. Please send me any pretty coloured pictures—any size—and I will forward them to the proper quarters. Those that are too large for scrap-books are greatly appreciated in the dug-outs and huts in France.

Gay Bags

The soldier or sailor in Hospital greatly appreciates a bag made of gay sateen or cretonne in which he can put all his small possessions. So do make a few of these bags in your idle moments. They should be of flowered cretonne—roses are the most popular—9 inches wide by 10 inches long, and put a cord or draw-string round the top. Then send the bags to me and I will forward them to the hospital where they are needed most.

Yours sincerely,

BELLA SIDNEY WOOLF
(Mrs. R. H. Lock).

All letters, gifts of money for St. Dunstan's Hostel for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors, and all silver oddments for the Silver Thimble Fund or kid gloves for the Glove Waistcoat Fund, should be sent to Mrs. R. H. Lock, THE QUIVER Office, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C. 4. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Cassell and Co., Limited.



Showing the Blotter, the Book Rack, the Pen Tray, and Photograph Frame.

THE strict economist may frown on Christmas presents in war-time, but many of us would rather forgo our Christmas dinner than abstain from sending our dear ones their customary reminder of the Festival of Love. We may necessarily have to curtail our expenditure, but ingenuity and novelty may well atone for that. Daintiness in packing also adds much to the attractiveness of a gift, and an accompanying message either in prose or verse is sure to give pleasure.

A Desk Set

A set of desk accessories is always a useful gift for either sex, and can be made in a great variety of ways. The set usually includes blotter, pen-tray, and a frame for photograph or calendar, but a waste-paper basket, a stationery case, a book rack, and a stamp case may well be added. Any of these articles might be used separately, of course. The specimens photographed were covered with a pretty floral cretonne costing 8½d. a yard; but tapestry, brocade, or stencilled or embroidered linen could be used instead, and a floral wall-paper, preferably of chintz design, gives excellent results.

WAR-TIME CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

By

MONICA WHITLEY

The Waste Paper Basket

Procure four pieces of stout cardboard 18 ins. by 8 ins. and one 8 ins. square. Take a piece of cretonne 34 ins. by 19 ins., a piece of sateen the same size, and two pieces of sateen 9 ins. square. Lay the cretonne face downwards on the table, and place the four pieces of cardboard side by side on it, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (not more) between the sides. Snip the turnings all round and paste them carefully

down to the cardboard with some good paste. Be sure to pull the edges over tightly so that the cretonne is quite taut on the right side. When dry lay the sateen over, wrong side downwards, and tack the two materials together between the pieces of cardboard, making a tiny invisible stitch on the cretonne side, and a long stitch on the sateen side. Stretch the sateen very tightly, or it will wrinkle when the basket is made up. Turn in the edges all round and slip-stitch very neatly to the cretonne. Put the two open sides together and slip-stitch invisibly. Cover the square of cardboard with sateen and slip-stitch to the bottom edges. A hexagonal basket could be made in a similar way.

The Blotter

A blotter that is too small is of very little use, so the one chosen is of generous size. The foundation is a blotting pad with corners which can be bought for six-pence or less, measuring 18 ins. by 11½ ins. A soiled one will do quite well, or a piece of plain card that size may be used, and strips of elastic may take the place of corners. This piece of card should be very

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stout, and another of the same kind is needed— $18\frac{1}{4}$ ins. by $11\frac{3}{4}$ ins.—for the lid; also a piece of quite thin card 18 ins. by $11\frac{1}{2}$ ins. Half a yard of sateen and some plain wall-paper matching the sateen will be wanted, and $\frac{1}{4}$ yard of black elastic $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide.

First cover the largest piece of card with cretonne, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ in. turnings. Cover the thinnest piece with sateen, and sew two pieces of elastic across $8\frac{1}{2}$ ins. apart. Sew these through the card half way across so as to make four loops for notepaper and envelopes. Cover the corners of the pad with cretonne, pasting it on. (If a plain piece of card is used the underside may be covered with cretonne and lined with sateen after the hinge has been fixed.)

To make the hinge, take a piece of stiff paper as long as the pad, and 2 ins. wide. Cover this with sateen, tacking the edges and neatly seaming the ends. Curve it slightly, but do not crease it down the middle. Stick the hinge to the back of the pad and the front of the

should be used to keep the corners down after glueing or pasting them.

The Pen Tray

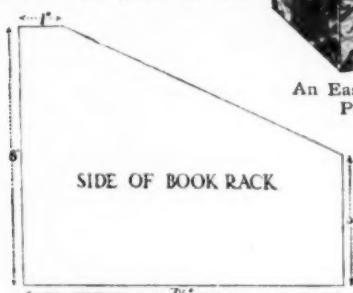
Any long, narrow box will serve as a foundation for this. For the original the lower part of a date box was used. Cover the side, inside and out, with a strip of cretonne, leaving turnings to be pasted down at the bottom. (These must be snipped in order to lie flat.) Paste a piece of shiny black paper on the bottom inside—this won't show inkstains—and a piece of the same kind, or matching that used for the blotter, on the underside.

The Photograph or Calendar Frame

An old padded photograph frame will answer well for this purpose. If you haven't one at hand, you may be able to buy a soiled one cheaply. If you mean to use it for a calendar, buy the calendar first, and choose the frame to fit it. Carefully pull the frame to pieces and re-cover it with cretonne, applying this with seccotine and making the corners very neat. Then fix the glass and back as before.

The Book Rack

Take a piece of stout cardboard $12\frac{1}{2}$ ins. by $7\frac{1}{2}$ ins., another $12\frac{1}{2}$ ins. by 6 ins., and two the shape of the accompanying diagram. Cover one side of each of these with cretonne, pasting the edges down, and line with cretonne, neatly slip-stitching the edges together. Now sew all the parts together, and the rack is finished. If you wish you can add cord or gimp round the edges, but if part of a set it should match the rest.



From this you can tell how the Book Rack is made.

cover with seccotine (paste is not strong enough), and allow the hinge to be $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide between the back and front. When dry seccotine the sateen-covered card to the front, and cover the back of the pad with the wall paper. Time must be allowed for the setting between each process, so that it is well to have several articles going at once. Heavy weights, such as flat irons,



An Easily-made Waste Paper Basket.

The Stationery Case

This is not illustrated. To make it a box is needed measuring about 10 ins. in width and 3 ins. from back to front. The back should be higher than the front, and the sides sloping. The parts should be cut out in cardboard, covered on both sides with cretonne, and then sewn together.

WAR-TIME CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

The Stamp Case

Any small strong cardboard box, round or square, will do for this. Cover with cretonne outside and paper inside. Be sure the lid is easy to remove.

Work Baskets

All kinds of pretty work baskets, or receptacles for odds and ends, can be made by covering boxes and adding handles. Take a box about 12 ins. by 7 ins. with sides 3 ins. high. Line the inside with wadded silk or satin, and cover the outside with brocade or pleated silk. Bind the edges with tinsel gimp. Make a handle of a strip of buckram 2 ins. wide, sew wire to each side, and cover to match the basket. Sew this in place, and cover the sewing-on with loops of ribbon or sprays of ribbon flowers. Similar boxes are often covered with wallpaper, the handle being made of a strip of thin card covered with paper, and affixed to the box by means of paper-fasteners. A basket like this is useful for letters, etc.



A Becoming Style of Boudoir Cap.

broidered pieces 12 ins. by 8½ ins.; the sides are 12 ins. by 5 ins., and only very lightly ornamented, but they could quite well be of plain material. A lining of silk the same shape is needed. The sides of the bag and lining are stitched separately, then each is folded so that the middle of each side piece comes at either side. The bottom edges of both bag and lining are sewn up, the seams pressed,

and the lining slipped inside the bag. The top edges are slip-stitched together, and the bag gathered to fit the clasp, the sides being sewn on plainly. When the bag is shut fold in the sides, catch down the corners to the bottom of the bag, and sew a piece of gold ball fringe round both sides.

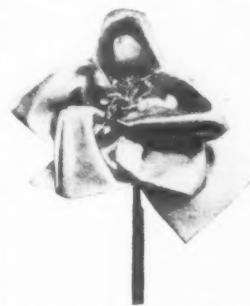
A Boudoir Cap

A boudoir cap makes a sweet little gift for any woman, young or old. A scrap of nainsook, crêpe-de-chine, or ninon, or other thin material will serve for the crown, and all that is needed besides are broad or narrow lace and a yard of narrow ribbon. Of course if you wish for more elaboration you can add some hand embroidery, artificial flowers, or other trimming, but the simple cap in the photograph, while quite dainty, has the merit of washing well, and only the ribbon need be removed for the process.

Cut a piece of crêpe-de-chine, or any other material you prefer, 16 ins. square. Fold in



Useful, as well as being attractive.



A Novel Scent-Sachet.

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half, and round off the upper corners with a good curve. Three inches from the bottom make two rows of gathers across, draw up into a space of 8 ins., and sew to a piece of narrow ribbon at the back. Edge the lower part, the frill, with lace 1½ ins. wide put on quite plainly, the corners being mitred. Roll the raw edges of the crown of the cap and draw up to measure 18 ins. Take a piece of lace edging or insertion 4 ins. wide and 8½ ins. long, and whip the full edges to this, keeping the fullness a little closer at the top of the head. Pleat the lace at the ends and cover the stitches with bows of ribbon.

A Scent Sachet

For a gift to slip in an envelope a scent sachet is admirable. Here is one which is rather novel, being almost hidden behind a large ribbon flower. Take ½ yard of pink satin ribbon 2 ins. wide, and ½ yard ½ in. wide. For the centre take that of an old artificial rose, or some loops of gold silk. From the wide ribbon cut off five pieces 4½ ins. long. Take one piece, fold lengthwise, and half way down catch the edges firmly together. Open out the cut ends, place one over the other, pleat up, and sew firmly. Make the other petals in the same way. From the remaining piece of ribbon make a little bag. Fill this with a piece of cotton wool well sprinkled with sachet powder. Pleat up the open ends. Sew the

petals to this end round the artificial centre. Make the back neat with a bow of narrow ribbon.

A flower made in this way could be used for many purposes—for trimming night-dress cases, photograph frames, hats, etc.

Packing

Save up all your odds and ends of narrow ribbon and coloured tape, and pieces of white and coloured tissue paper. These may be smoothed out with an iron if necessary. Save up all your pretty boxes too. Plain ones may be covered with floral wall-paper. Pack your gift carefully and add a few drops of scent on a bit of cotton wool, if you like. Fill up all the corners with balls of tissue paper so that your gift will not be crushed or crumpled. Have plenty of outer wrappings, and give further protection by means of corrugated cardboard. Be sure to write the address plainly, and do this in more than one place. As a precaution give your own address to which the parcel may be returned in case of non-delivery. Your labels may be special Christmas ones, bearing the old Christmas message, if you like, but in this case write the address on the parcel as well, as labels are sometimes lost. Dispatch your gifts in good time so that they will not be delayed. A gift when the season is a few days old always falls somewhat flat. "Better a day too soon than an hour too late."

A FIVE O'CLOCK TEA-CLOTH

Worth-while Work for Winter Evenings

MATERIALS required: Linen centre to measure 36 inches; four balls linen crochet thread No. 25, and three balls of No. 50. The lace, when finished, is about 9 inches wide, making the finished cloth about 54 inches across.

ABBREVIATIONS: Ch., chain; tr., treble; l., loop; sl. st., slip stitch; p., picot; d., double (hook through work, thread over, draw through, making two loops on hook, over and draw through both); h. tr., half treble; l. tr., long treble.

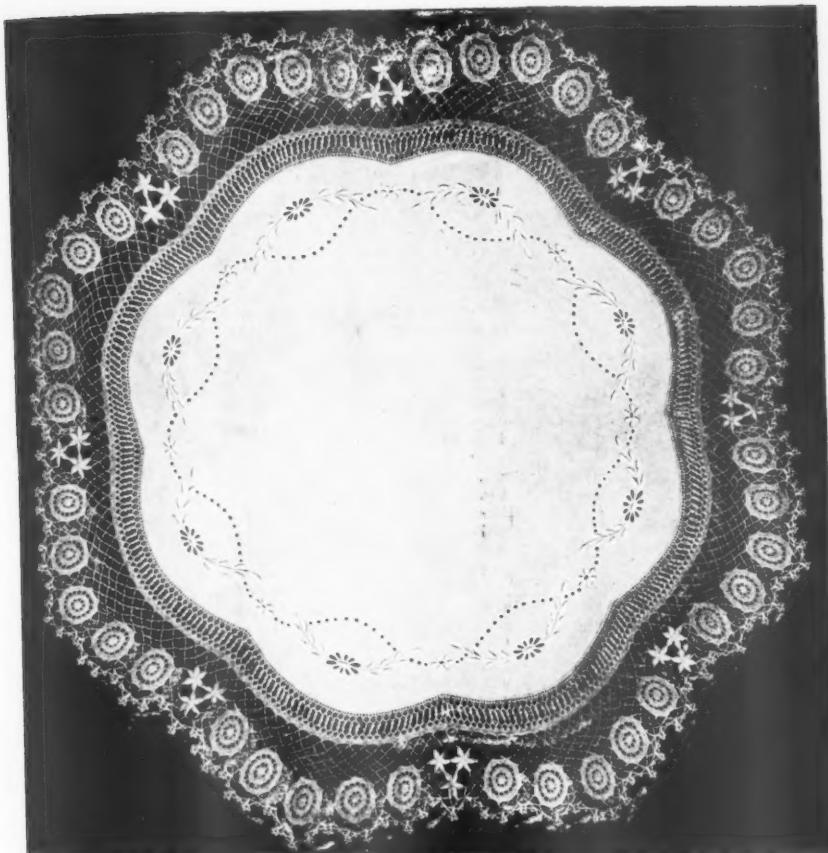
With fine thread machine-stitch three rows close together along the line of the scallops, cut away the linen and double crochet the edge closely with No. 25 thread. Mark with pencil dot the exact middle between scallops and the exact middle of each scallop.

CHAIN LOOPS ROUND EDGE.—Fasten No. 25 thread in edge one-eighth of an inch left of dot between scallops, ch. 4, tr. in edge, * ch. 6, tr. back in st. where 6 ch. started (slipping hook under two threads lying on top of angle), tr. in edge, ch. 2, tr. in edge, repeat from *, being sure to have the 19th loop in middle of scallops and 38th between scallops, 304 l. round lines.

PICOT LOOP BAND.—*1st row*—Slip stitch to middle of ch. loop, * ch. 1, p. (ch. 2 more, catch back with d. in first st.), ch. 3, p., ch. 2, p., ch. 3, p., ch. 2, p., ch. 1, d. to middle st. of first ch. of 3, ch. 1, p., ch. 1, d. in next ch. 1. Repeat from * round, join.

2nd row—Fasten thread to middle of 1., * ch. 1, p., ch. 3, p., ch. 1, d. in middle of next 1., repeat from * round, join.

A FIVE O'CLOCK TEA-CLOTH



The Transfer of the Embroidered Design on this Cloth is obtainable for 7d., post free,
from "The Editor, 'The Quiver,' La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C. 4."

3rd row—Slip stitch to middle of l. of 2nd row, repeat 2nd row.

DOUBLE CROCHET BAND.—Fasten No. 50 thread to middle of l., 4 d. over each loop.

2nd, 3rd, and 4th rows—d. in d. all round.

PICOT LOOPS.—*1st row*—Fasten No. 25 thread to double crochet band opposite the ch. l., which lies to the right of a middle ch. l. between scallops, ch. 3, p., ch. 7, p., ch. 3, d. in band opposite third ch. l. from starting-point (skipping 1). This makes this picot loop (p. l.) lie exactly opposite middle ch. l. between scallops. Repeat p. l. all round, catching them with d. opposite every other ch. l. Catch thread well over into end row of double crochet band to make the work strong.

2nd row—Slip stitch to middle of p. l., p. l. to middle of next p. l. all round, join.

FLOWERS.—With No. 25 thread ch. 3, join with sl. st., * ch. 10, turn, 1 sl. st., 1 d., 1 h. tr., 3 tr., 1 h. tr., 1 d., 1 sl. st., 1 sl. st. to middle ch. of 3. Repeat from *, making 6 petals. Leave end of thread and sew in shape with needle. Make three flowers, sew together at ends of petals as illustrated. Make eight of these groups. Sew these groups of flowers to picot loops as illustrated, letting the space between two of the flowers come exactly opposite the middle ch. l. between scallops.

THIRD ROW OF PICOT LOOPS.—You will find there are now 15 p. l. between groups of flowers. Fasten No. 25 thread to the end of first loose petal on the left, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in middle of p. l., repeat p. l. to end of this row, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, catch end of loose petal and fasten off. There should be 14 l. between flowers (not counting half loops at each end of row).

4th row—Fasten thread in middle of 3rd p. l. from beginning of 3rd row, repeat 1. to middle of 3rd l. from end (9 l.), turn.

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5th row—Slip stitch to middle of l. last made, repeat loops to middle of l. at end of this row (8 l.), fasten off.

6th row—Fasten thread to middle of 3rd l. from beginning of 5th row, repeat loops to middle of 3rd l. from end of row (3 l.), turn.

7th row—Slip stitch to middle l. last made, repeat to end of row (2 l.), fasten off. Repeat all round between flowers.

MEDALLIONS.—Number 50 thread.

CENTRE.—Chain 3, join, 2 d. in each st., continue d. in d., widening when necessary to keep it flat until one-half inch in diameter. Join with sl. st.

1st row—ch. 6, * tr. in edge, ch. 3, repeat from * round centre, making 8 tr., counting first ch. of 3 as one tr., join.

2nd row—d. around edge, making 3 d. over each ch. of 3 and 1 d. in each tr.

3rd row—d. in d., widening opposite each tr.

4th row—d. in d., join.

5th row—ch. 6, * tr. in edge, ch. 3, repeat from *, making 16 tr., join.

6th row—3 d. over each ch. and 1 d. in each tr.

7th, 8th, and 9th rows—d. in d. all round, fasten off. It should measure about 3 inches in diameter, and lie perfectly flat. Make forty of these medallions and sew each medallion to 2 p. l. as illustrated, and if your work is finished this far you will easily see the two loops left for each medallion.

FIRST ROW PICOT LOOPS ROUND MEDALLIONS AND FLOWERS.—Fasten No. 25 thread to only remaining loose petal of left flower, * p. l. to end of next petal, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in edge of medallion about three-quarters of an inch from where loop is sewn to medallion (catch well over into 2nd row), ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. to middle of p. l. just made and lying opposite this one, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in edge of medallion, make 8 more p. l. around medallion (9 l. counting this one), catching last one three-quarters of an inch from where l. is sewn to medallion, * ch. 3, p., ch. 3, catch in middle of p. l. lying next to sewn one (the same row) on foundation, sl. st. along bar forming half of next l. to middle, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in middle of p. l. last made (on medallion), ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in edge of next medallion three-quarters of an inch from where l. is sewn, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in middle of p. l. lying opposite, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in edge of medallion, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in middle of opposite p. l., ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in edge of medallion (this fills in the p. l. between medallions), make 7 more l. round medallion (9 l. in all round

each medallion), repeat from *. After having made 9 l. round the middle medallion you will find that a slight change is necessary because the scallop of the linen is now curving in instead of out. After 9th l. make another p. l., d. in middle of next l. on foundation just below the sewn one, sl. st. along bar to middle of next, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in middle of next medallion, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. to middle of loop last made (lying opposite), and continue as before. After having made the 9th l. on 5th medallion, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, catch in end of petal of flower opposite (this petal is already fastened to one-half loop), ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. to middle of l. last made (opposite), ch. 3, p., ch. 3, catch end of loose petal, p. l. to end of next petal of middle flower (p. l. to next petal), 3 times, p. l. to loose petal in last flower, which is also the starting-point for next scallop. Repeat from first * all round.

The 1st, 3rd, and 5th medallions and groups of flowers have 5 loose l. on edge. The 2nd and 4th medallions have 4 loose l. on edge.

NEXT Row PICOT LOOPS.—Picot loop to middle of p. l. Between medallions, from middle of last l. ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. tr. to st. between half loops of preceding row, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. to middle of next l.

BETWEEN MEDALLIONS AND FLOWERS.—From middle of last l. ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. tr. to st. between half loops of preceding row, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in middle of next l., ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in middle of l. lying opposite (just made), ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. in next l.

EDGE.—Slip stitch nearly to middle of p. l. * ch. 3, p., ch. 3, tr. back in st. where this ch. started, d. over p. l. (making this finished small loop lie across the middle of p. l.), ch. 3, p., ch. 3, l. tr. into d. between p. l. of preceding row, l. tr. into same st., l. tr. into same st., ch. 5, turn, d. into top of first l. tr., turn back, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, tr. back in st. where this ch. started, ch. 3, p., ch. 3, tr. into st. where this chain started (slipping hook under two stitches lying on top of angle), rep. at (making three small loops on edge), d. in left side of hole formed by the 5 ch., ch. 3, p., ch. 3, d. over next p. l. Repeat from * all round except that the corners between medallions and between medallions and groups of flowers are filled in this way, 3 l. tr. in d. between p. l. and half loop of preceding row, 3 l. tr. in corresponding st. on edge of next medallion (skipping the st. exactly between them), ch. 5, turn, d. in top of first l. tr., and finish with three small loops on edge just like the others.

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BETTY UNINVITED

BY

RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

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CHAPTER I

If it is true that a man may be known by the house he lives in, then, judging Richard Hollidge by his study, we may conclude, and more or less correctly, that he was methodical, orderly, slightly ascetic, honest, and a bit utilitarian. The house itself—of creamy-white stucco, with two storeys—faced a country road which ambled along the slope of a shallow valley, and which, in the course of time, reached the village of Amhurst, two miles away. The rooms were square and spacious—a wide hall, flanked on the right by a drawing-room and on the left by a library. Beyond the library was the study; light and space seemed to be its keynote, and it bore none of the devices approved of writers.

Richard Hollidge sat at the desk, pen in hand. Taking no cognisance of his surroundings we should likely describe him as a very good-looking, well set up, carefully dressed fellow, who is possibly a year or two younger than he appears, and who takes himself and things in general a trifle too seriously. He paused in his occupation of running lines of small and ridiculously legible writing across a sheet of white paper, and allowed a flicker of annoyance to ruffle the surface of his brow.

The noise of carriage-wheels on gravel, the susurration of voices, disturbed him. For days he had been peculiarly, unwillingly susceptible to disturbing sounds. Possibly, could he have closed all the windows, these sounds would not have reached him; but, although it was still the first week in June, the weather was warm. Richard wondered if it could be possible that he was losing interest in his work, but that was too impossible for credence. Why, only a month ago he had started out with the utmost enthusiasm, with an eager impatience that had sent his pen flying. Fearing that social demands might interfere with the progress of his work, he had dragged

Aunt Letitia out here to "The Hermitage" a whole fortnight earlier than usual. And with what result? He had wasted a week in settling down, and then, having become settled, had struggled for a second week against a most inexplicable mental supineness.

Opening a drawer at his right, he lifted out a pile of manuscript and laid it before him. So much, written in the library of the old brick house in Chelsea. Here was the title page: "The Principles of Good English, for the Use of Schools and Colleges, by Richard Greenough Hollidge, formerly Professor of English at Oxford." And here was the preface, seven closely-written sheets of it; the introduction, fifty-odd sheets of that; and here was the first book of part one; and here—he rearranged the sheets almost affectionately—here were the first six chapters of book two.

So far so good; but there still remained to be written almost two-thirds of the work; and he had agreed—rashly, as it seemed now—to deliver the complete copy to the publishers by the first of September. Ordinarily, that would have given him time and to spare; but when one lags through less than three thousand words in a fortnight, ten weeks loom startlingly short. He shook his head as he replaced the manuscript in its drawer.

In London he had been able to work with all the babble of noises beating against his windows; yet here, in the hushed solitude of the country, the least sound annoyed him. It was absurd, perplexing. Had he ever been troubled with nerves he would have blamed them now; but he never had been. Twenty-eight years of age, he had always taken good care of his body, and held himself superior to all physical or mental twinges. But this morning—why, hang it!—he felt as he imagined Aunt Letitia must feel at the approach of a thunderstorm; just as though—just as though something was about to be struck.

THE QUIVER

He arose, and, applying a match to the pipe which hung idly from his mouth, puffed irritably as he crossed the old-blue and rose field of the big Gorovan carpet and stationed himself with his back to the fireplace. He recalled a conversation with Aunt Letitia, held at the dinner-table the evening before. He had casually bewailed his inability to concentrate on his work, and, to his surprise, Aunt Letitia had seized upon the subject with avidity.

"My dear," she had declared convincingly, "you are trying to do too much. I've seen it ever since we came. You need a change of scene. Why not ask someone here to—amuse you, Richard? There's that Mr. Craigie—"

"Tom Craigie! Good gracious!"

"I thought you liked him, Richard. He seems very good company—so amusing and full of spirits—"

"Amusing, yes, if you want to be amused. I don't. Tom Craigie would settle it! Or anybody else, for that matter. As it is, it is hard enough. With anybody in the house—visitors—I'd— Well, I'd simply have to give up. If you love me, Aunt Letitia, don't ask anyone out here. At least, not yet. Perhaps later. I realise it must be dull for you, though, and perhaps by August—"

"Don't trouble about me, my dear. I'm quite contented to get away from folk for awhile. I was only thinking of you, thinking that perhaps, if there was someone here to take your mind away from your work now and then—"

"That's just what I don't want. There are enough distractions without importing any. I shall be all right in a day or two. I dare say it's partly the weather; it is hot for the time of year. And possibly I haven't been getting enough exercise."

Richard, recalling the conversation, smiled. In all the years Aunt Letitia and he had been together—which was ever since his mother's death—he had never succeeded in convincing her that seclusion and quiet were essential to the literary worker. Aunt Letitia was a dear, and he feared she was finding her journey to London this hot day decidedly uncomfortable. He glanced at his watch. Well, she would soon be there; it was nearly half past eleven. Then he frowned, observing guiltily and almost distastefully the desk at the end of the room. The morning almost gone and nothing to show! Moved by a sudden impulse, he strode across the floor, pushed aside the French window, and emerged on to the porch.

Before him spread the flower-garden, hedge-enclosed on all sides, with grassed paths that wound and wandered through an orderly tangle of colour and greenery.

One step took Richard from the porch to

the turf, and in a moment he was following a curving path between beds of shrubs and old-fashioned flowers, dimly conscious of a sense of relief and of truancy. He came on between the glorious tangles of blossoms and leaves to the farther shrubbery, where gleamed a circular seat, guarded on either side by a column bearing the laughing head of a faun. He raised his eyes toward the seat. And then, since it is but natural that one walking in a garden of which he believes himself to be the only inhabitant should be surprised at suddenly coming face to face with another, Richard stopped short and stared.

CHAPTER II

SHE was seated on the marble bench in an attitude that proclaimed ease and content. Leaning back slightly against the cool stone, her hands were clasped loosely in her lap, and a pair of slender ankles, clad in brown silk and leather, were crossed in front of her beyond the edge of the dark blue gown. She was bare of head, and the red-brown mass of her hair—and there seemed a great deal of it—was pushed away from her forehead in a soft wave. A pair of violet eyes under high-arched brows and long, dark lashes looked forth in quiet amusement, while below a small, straight nose two red lips were set in a demure smile. Beside her, on the stone bench, writhed a long, white glove. Its fellow lay, crumpled, on the tiles below.

All this, you may be certain, Richard did not see, or, seeing, did not comprehend. Nor, you may be equally certain, did he continue to stand and stare for any such length of time as it has taken to picture the vision confronting him. No; he recovered with commendable celerity, and, as the young lady on the garden seat continued to regard him with smiling equanimity, silent and inquiring, for all the world, he thought later, as though he and not she were the trespasser, he addressed her.

"Good morning," he said politely. "Were you—are you—that is, can I do anything for you?"

Whoever she was, and in spite of the fact that she was most evidently a lady and eminently attractive, it was necessary for her to understand that she had no right to make herself at home in his garden in this unconcerned manner, and he managed to convey as much by his tones. Undoubtedly she was properly impressed with the fact of her misdemeanour, for—she laughed! And, having laughed, the girl sat up briskly and nodded her red-brown head until the wealth of tresses swayed happily.

"Oh, yes," she answered, and her voice seemed somehow to fit in there with the

BETTY UNINVITED

flowers and the sunlight. "Yes, you can do a great deal for me." She arose to her absurd height of five feet and a few inches and held out a slim hand to him. "You're Dick, aren't you?"

Hesitantly, Richard took the hand, but, "Dick?" he echoed, startled. "I am Richard Hollidge. You wished to see me?"

Again came the laugh, and as she laughed she closed her eyes just a little. "You haven't changed a mite, have you?" she asked. "But, very well, then, Richard—Cousin Richard."

"I—I beg your pardon?" he stammered. "May I ask who—er—"

"You don't mean that you don't know me?" The laughter died suddenly out of her face and the red mouth drooped disappoindedly.

"I—I—" He felt himself a brute, a scoundrel, something far too low and mean for naming, and, realising it, he resented it. What right had this absurd girl with her silly laughter to intrude on the privacy of his garden and make him feel like—like—

"And so you've forgotten me!" She shook her head sadly. He could almost have sworn that the violet eyes grew misty. There was something disturbingly plaintive in the manner in which she slowly drew her hand from his. Then, tremulously, with tears in her young voice, she added simply, "I'm Betty."

"Oh!" he said blankly. He waited for her to continue, but evidently she considered that she had told him sufficient, for she was regarding him now expectantly, hopefully, watching for recollection to burst upon him. A smile hovered at the corners of her mouth, ready to take instant possession. And yet all he could say was, "Betty? Betty who? Betty—er—what?"

And then, instead of lapsing into tears, which was what he was fearfully afraid she would do, she burst into laughter! And just when, puzzled and a little bit annoyed, he felt a frown gathering on his forehead, the laughter died away as suddenly as an April shower and only a smile remained, a demure, provoking, mocking smile.

"I guess," she replied demurely, "it's Betty Uninvited!"

"I'm afraid," Richard said again with chill politeness, "that I don't understand."

"Of course you don't," replied the girl cheerfully. "Come and sit down, and I'll tell you the whole story."

She perched herself again on the garden seat, folded her hands in her lap, crossed her absurdly slim ankles, and smiled invitingly. Richard seated himself a safe yard away, and observed her expectantly and a trifle distrustfully. She shook her head.

"That will never do," she sighed. "I beg your pardon?"

"How can you expect me to lay bare the innermost secrets of my heart if you look at me in that way?"

He smiled slightly. "Is that necessary?"

"Yes; I'm afraid so. I must begin at the beginning and tell you all." She sank her voice to a thrilling whisper. "You have a cousin!"

Richard shook his head. "I think not."

"Oh, don't be so particular! A second cousin, then."

"I believe so; several, I think."

"But one particular one!"

"Really? Then, I am to understand that you—er—"

She nodded. "Yes, I am it—her—she! My name is Elizabeth Carolyn Lee—Carolyn with a 'y,' if you please!—of Newchurch."

"Oh, then, you're Betty Lee? I beg your pardon, I'm sure. I should have known. I—er—I'm very glad to see you, Miss Lee."

Betty made a face. "Well, there's no good reason why you should have remembered me, I suppose, because when we last met I was a wee tot in short dresses." Richard unconsciously glanced at her present gown. "I mean real short," she explained, intercepting the glance. "Somewhere around my knees. And you were a very important young gentleman in school. And that must have been nearly fifteen years ago. And, of course, I've changed since then."

He smiled. "Undoubtedly. I fancy we both have."

She regarded him appraisingly and shook her head. "I don't think you have—much. Of course you're older, and you have a funny little bristly moustache, and you wear glasses, but I think I'd have known you in a crowd, Cousin Richard. Now, don't you want to know what I'm doing here?"

"If—er—it is not impertinent."

"There! Thank heaven you have a sense of humour, after all. I was afraid you hadn't. You know you used not to have."

"Really? I must have been—well, rather a bore, eh?"

"You were, to be frank." She laughed and nodded. "And you had no use for girls. But, somehow, I liked you just the same, and I was quite broken-hearted when you went back to school."

"That was kind of you," he laughed. "From what you say it would appear that I was not especially deserving of—liking."

"I don't think you were," she replied candidly. "And that's one reason I came."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; I wanted to see whether you were—well, whether you had grown any more human!"

"Oh! And—er—have I?"

THE QUIVER

"Oh, lots! And I'm so glad, because, you see, it—it justifies my former—shall we say affection?"

"Pray do," he responded gravely.

"Well—and now what were we talking about? Oh, yes, you were about to demand what I was doing here in your garden without a ticket!"

"On the contrary, Miss Lee, I was about to express my pleasure. And we don't collect the tickets until you go out."

"Thank you. That will help a great deal. But—arent' you going to be curious? Aren't you just dying to know why I'm here and everything?"

"I am."

"You'll be awfully surprised when I tell you," she warned. "Surprised and—and maybe a little shocked."

"I shall strive to conceal the surprise and hope to survive the shock."

"Well, then—" She swung her shoes out and regarded them gravely for a moment. Then she turned a laughing face to him. "I've run away!"

"Run away! From what?"

"Everything! My devoted parents, my palatial home—everything!" She viewed him in sparkling triumph. "And here I am!"

"So I see," he responded dryly. "And the—er—motive?"

"The motive? A taxi from the dock at Liverpool, then trains, more taxis, and, finally, a funny tumble-down cab to your hospitable door."

Richard brought forth his pipe and slowly filled it.

"Don't you think you'd better tell me all about it?" he asked. "Then we can see what's best to be done."

"Oh, there's nothing to be done, Cousin Richard. You needn't worry about that. But I suppose I'd better explain a little more—what's the word?—lucidly. You see"—she turned and faced him, hands clasped about one slim knee—"you see, here's how it happened. You know Dad—I mean, you know how determined he is. Of course you do, though—everyone does. Well, he was determined that I should go to America this summer. I was determined I shouldn't. Mother—well, she didn't exactly take sides, but she sort of sneakily favoured Dad. And I think that was downright treacherous, don't you?"

"Not knowing the exact status—"

"Well, it was. I told her I didn't want any more America. Think, Cousin Richard, I've been there every year except one since I can remember! Dad goes over to get some contracts or something. And I don't know what this country looks like west of London! I—just said I didn't want to go, and—and I wouldn't. It wasn't as though they needed me; and there were two or

three places I might have stayed at at home. The Parkinsons asked me to Scotland with them, for one thing; but Dad wouldn't hear of my staying behind. So—so just before the boat sailed, I walked down the gangplank, stepped into a taxi, and that's all!"

"But, my dear young lady!" exclaimed Richard, dropping ashes on his knees in his agitation. "Your parents will be frantic with anxiety!"

"Oh, no, they won't, because I sent a wireless as soon as I was sure the ship was out of the Mersey. So that's all right. And I wrote a letter and sent it by the next boat. The letter explains everything beautifully."

"I see. And the wireless message? Was that—er—explanatory?"

"Yes, I said, 'No America for me. Look for letter at hotel. Staying with Bradfords. Love.—Betty.'"

"And did you get a reply?"

Betty nodded cheerfully. "From Dad. 'Conduct most reprehensible. Follow next sailing without fail. Wire departure.'"

"And the next sailing?"

"Has sailed."

"But—but surely you don't mean to disobey—"

"Cousin Richard," she replied gravely, "I am twenty years of age. I am *not* a child. I shall *not* go to America."

Richard considered, frowning at his pipe. Betty watched him in apparent breathless suspense; only her eyes suggested that possible anxiety was not uppermost in her mind.

"Then you intend," asked Richard, after a moment, "to visit the—er—Bradleys?"

"Bradfords. I did intend to, but when I reached their house yesterday noon I found they were away. Wasn't that horrid?"

"Then you are on your way to them now?" Richard knew she was not. Away down deep inside of him somewhere an awful premonition was taking shape. Betty shook her head cheerfully.

"No. You see, I haven't the faintest idea where they're gone. Of course, I can find out, but it will take time; perhaps a week, perhaps two."

"Oh! Then, may I ask—er—what your plan is?"

Betty's eyes opened wide in surprise. "Why, I thought of course you understood, Cousin Richard! I've come to visit you!"

CHAPTER III

IT was all explained. He knew now why he had felt restless all the morning, unable to work, shadowed by a consciousness of impending misfortune. It had arrived. The blow had fallen. After this, he would never scoff at premonitions.

BETTY UNINVITED

Nevertheless, he met the shock like a hero. He removed his pipe, and glanced at it apparently with great interest.

"I see," he said calmly.

"Of course there's nothing else to do," said Betty, a bit hurriedly. "I simply couldn't stay at an hotel, could I? Not for days and days? I did last night, but it was terribly stupid and lonesome. I might go to the Parkinsons' after a while; I'd have to find out first if it was convenient, and I don't know just what part of Scotland they're in. I think, though, it's somewhere north of Edinburgh. And I suppose there are other people who would take me if I knew where they were, but I don't. Everyone seems to be out of town. I never knew folk to leave so early. I think it's perfectly absurd, don't you? Well, when I saw what I was up against—I mean, when I saw what a fix I was in, I, of course, thought of you and Aunt—Aunt—"

"Letitia," offered Richard.

"Aunt Letitia. I knew you'd be glad to have me with you until I could arrange things. And it's such a comfort being with one's relatives in time of—of trouble, isn't it?"

"H'm!"

Betty's face fell, and there was a suggestion of a sob in her voice. "Cousin Richard, I don't believe you are glad!" she said. "I—I don't believe you want me here!"

"Not at all! I mean—er—I'm most delighted," he assured her hurriedly. "I was only thinking—"
"What, please?"



"I guess," she replied demurely,
"it's Betty Uninvited." —p. 157

Drawn by
Charles Horrell.

"Well, you see, it's a little awkward—just at this time—"

"Awkward? You mean you are expecting guests?"

"Good heavens, no! I mean that—that—well, as a matter of fact, Aunt Letitia has gone to London to remain overnight."

"Yes," Betty nodded. "So the maid told me. But that won't matter, will it? Sophie—isn't that her name?—will look after me, Richard. You needn't put yourself out a mite, really."

THE QUIVER

"I hadn't intended—I mean, you don't understand, Miss Lee. There are—hm—such things as—er—conventions."

"Conventions? You mean, Aunt Letitia has gone to a convention?"

"I mean nothing of the sort," responded Richard shortly. "I am trying to point out the very evident fact that it would scarcely do for you to remain at The Hermitage—"

"Is that what you call it? It's a very pretty name, I think. And appropriate, too; sort of out of the way, and all shut in by hedges, you know."

"As I was saying, it would scarcely do for you to stay here in the absence of Aunt Letitia."

"Oh!" Betty observed her shoes thoughtfully. "You think—it wouldn't be proper. But—but we're cousins, and—"

"We are not cousins, and even if we were—"

"We're second cousins, and that's the same thing—almost."

"I'm afraid that hasn't much to do with it," replied Richard gently. "The fact remains that it—er—would hardly do."

"On, bother! Don't you ever consider anything but facts? They're such horrid, uninteresting things!"

"At any rate, they're necessary things, Miss Lee. I'm awfully sorry, really. At any other time—"

"You're not sorry, and you're as pleased as Punch that you can get rid of me!"

"Now, really, that's hardly fair!"

"Yes, you are! And just for that I shan't go! I don't care if Aunt—Aunt What's-her-name is away. You simply can't turn me out into the road to—to starve and—and sleep under hedges!"

"Great Scott, I have no intention of seeing you starve. Please be sensible. Can't you see—"

"That I'm not wanted? Oh, yes, I can see that." Betty rescued her glove from the ground and smoothed its length across her knees. "And I do think that when folks are cousins—anyway, relatives—they might be little kinder to each other."

Her face was very doleful, and Richard's heart smote him.

"At least," he announced brightly, "we can have some luncheon together, and then settle what is best to be done afterwards. Perhaps you could—er—find some of your friends by telegraphing. You must be tired after your long journey. Suppose we go to the house, and I'll get Sophie to show you a room. Wouldn't you like to lie down awhile before luncheon?"

"I'm not a bit tired," she answered listlessly. "Only disappointed—terribly disappointed."

"I—I'm very sorry," he murmured. "But, of course, you see—"

"I suppose so," she responded sadly. The

violet eyes seemed misty as she shot a pathetic glance at Richard. That perturbed gentleman lowered his gaze and blinked. After all, wasn't there some way out of it? Hang it, you can't turn a young girl, and a sort of relative at that, away from your home like—like a hawker! If only Aunt Letitia—

His thoughts were cut short by an exclamation from the girl. "That's it!" she announced in triumph, kicking her feet most undignifiedly and waving the glove. "Weren't we two sillies not to think of it?"

"Of—what?" he asked, startled.

"Why," she beamed, "it's the simplest thing in the world. All we have to do, Richard, is telegraph Aunt What's-her name to come home at once!"

"Telegraph Aunt Letitia!" he ejaculated.

"Of course! Why do you suppose we didn't think of it before?"

"But—but she intends to remain in London overnight!"

"And I intend to remain here overnight," laughed Betty. "So, you see, my dear cousin, you must do it. Now, don't be horrid, *please!* You know you want me to stay and visit you. Think of all the way I've come! And I haven't a dress to my back!"

"No dress!"

"Just this and a silk blouse," she responded cheerfully. "You see, I couldn't get away with anything more than a bag. I had to leave my trunks on board. Richard, you haven't the heart to turn me out of doors with just one gown and a blouse! Think what I'd look like after a week, sleep in ditches and under hedges!"

"But, my dear young lady—"

"Don't you think you might call me Betty?"

"Er—I can't ask Aunt Letitia to turn about and come back the minute she reaches town! It—it would be absurd!"

"Very well. Just as you like. For my part, I can do without Aunt Letitia very nicely."

Richard eyed her askance. She swung her feet, hummed a tune, and smiled blissfully at the sunlit garden.

"Well," he temporised after a moment, with a sigh, "we—we will discuss it later. Allow me to suggest that we go to the house. Sophie shall show you to a room—"

"Don't trouble, please. I know the way about. You see, I had nothing much to do, and so I explored. Besides, it isn't nearly time for luncheon, is it? Don't you think that maybe we'd better get that telegram off to Aunt Letitia right away?"

An hour later they were seated at opposite sides of the luncheon table. Betty had preempted Aunt Letitia's place.

"May I ask the cook to make me some coffee, Richard?" she asked.

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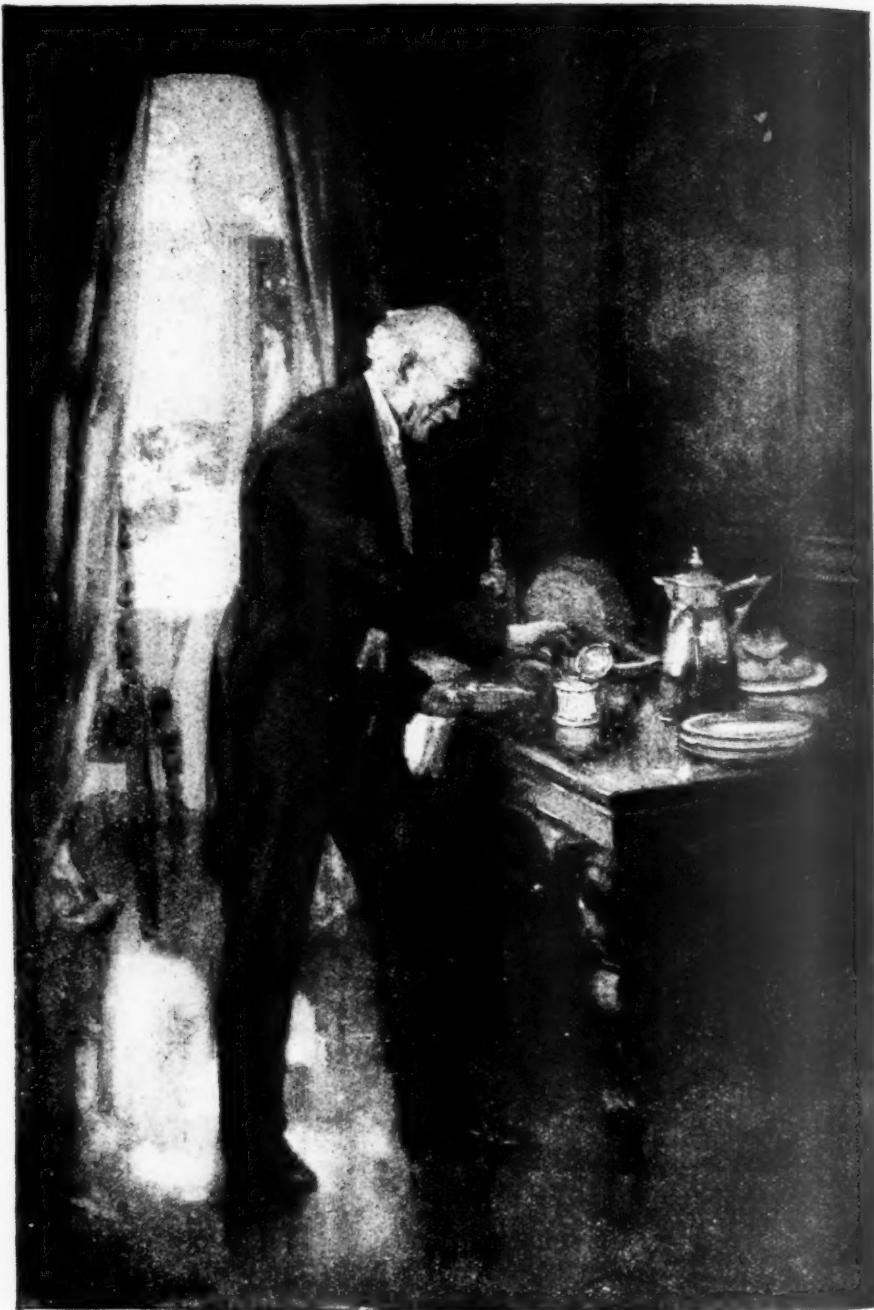
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BETTY UNINVITED

"Of course. I beg your pardon. Please ask for anything you want. Perhaps I should have told them to prepare something extra for you. You see, I don't eat very heartily at noon; it's so soon after work."

"Work? Oh, you mean your writing. There's plenty of luncheon for me, Cousin. I am hungry, though. You see, I didn't have any money left after I'd bought my ticket, and so I couldn't indulge in the luxury of breakfast this morning."

"Do you really mean that you've had no breakfast?" he exclaimed in amazement and horror.

"Not a bite. I'm having it now. Hence the coffee."

"And you ran away from the boat without any money?"

"Oh, no, I had a little—about ten pounds. I knew you would let me have some until I hear from Dad. You will, won't you?"

"Naturally. But surely ten pounds was enough to last you twenty-four hours?"

"Um—not quite. It takes such a lot for taxis and tips; and then there was the hotel bill and my railway ticket to pay for. Besides, I had to buy one or two little things in London yesterday. Really, when I come to think of it, Richard, I don't believe I ever made ten pounds go so far! I—I'm a little bit extravagant. Dad says so—when he's grumpy."

"Suppose that when you arrived here you had found nobody here. What would you have done then?"

"But I knew. I telephoned to Chelsea, and found you were here. And that's another thing that cost money. I think it was something like three shillings for that."

"Whom, pray, did you telephone to?"

"To Mr. Craigie. He knows you very well."

"Tom Craigie? Then he hasn't gone away, yet?"

"No, and"—Betty smiled demurely—"I don't think he is going—now."

"Not going? He told me not more than three weeks ago that he was most assuredly going fishing in Wales. He was to have gone to-day or—"

"Yesterday, Richard. You see, I told him beforehand."

"Told him? Told him what?"

"That I wasn't really going."

"Oh!" Richard viewed her blankly. "So that's it?"

Betty nodded gently. "I—I think so. You like him, don't you?"

"You've stayed behind so as to—that is—"

"No, truly, I didn't! He did, but I didn't. Don't you think he's terribly nice and awfully handsome, Richard?"

"How long have you known him? He has never spoken to me of you."

"Not long. We met first last winter at

the Applethorpes'. He dances divinely. Have you ever seen him dance?"

"I never have, to my knowledge," answered Richard, without enthusiasm. "Tom is my friend, but I can't say I approve of this sort of thing."

"There isn't any 'sort of thing,'" responded Betty, with a laugh. "He's been very nice to me on several occasions, and—and quite attentive, and when I had to find out whether you were in Chelsea or here I naturally telephoned to him."

"I don't think that was—er—very nice. It looks as though you had arranged to remain in this country to—er—be near him. Next thing, he will be down here after you."

"Yes, he said he'd probably get you to ask him down for a while," replied Betty calmly.

"Oh, he did?" Richard's lips set grimly. "I think there's a disappointment due to Mr. Thomas Craigie."

Betty smiled, untroubled, and buttered a triangle of curly toast. Betty's method was novel to her companion. Balancing a large piece of butter on the edge of the toast, she bit off the butter in such a way as to leave the toast practically unscathed. He estimated that one slice of bread would serve Betty for something like a quarter of a pound of butter!

"When," asked Betty presently, "do you think Aunt Letitia will get that telegram?"

Richard, looking concerned, helped himself to a second glass of milk—an unusual indulgence. "It is hard to say. In fact, it has occurred to me since sending it that it may not reach her at all. I sent it to the house. Aunt Letitia was going there as soon as she got to town, and it is quite possible that she left there before the telegram arrived. In which case it is extremely doubtful that it will find her."

"Then, hadn't you better send another one to—to some other place?" asked Betty.

"Unfortunately, I don't know where to send it. She spoke of having luncheon at the Touraine Hotel, after which she was to do some shopping. I believe she intended spending the night with some friends, probably the Prescotts. Not anticipating the necessity of—er—communicating with her, I was, I fear, inattentive. It is most annoying."

"Well, anyway, we've done our duty, haven't we?" said Betty consolingly.

"Possibly, but that doesn't relieve us of the—er—embarrassment," returned Richard dryly. "I think I had better try the telephone, and see if I can get word to her at the hotel or the Prescotts'. I'd better call up the house too. Will you excuse me a moment? It takes some time to get through to London."

At two-thirty Aunt Letitia was being

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sought for at the Touraine, and without success. At three, Richard's caretaker informed him that Miss Dallen had been and gone, and was not expected again. At about four Mrs. Prescott's voice assured him faintly over the wire that, while she would have been delighted to have Aunt Letitia spend the night with her, she didn't expect her, and knew nothing of her visit to town. If, however, Aunt Letitia arrived, she would tell her to call Richard up immediately. Richard hung up the receiver with a gesture of despair, and reported the result to Betty, who was curled up in a corner of the big divan in the library. Betty expressed sympathy, but seemed only mildly interested.

"So now the question is, what are we to do?" stated Richard.

"I don't see that there's anything we *can* do," replied Betty. "You wouldn't care to telephone the police, I suppose?"

"I should not," answered Richard shortly. "Besides, as—well, as you will, of course, be going before long—"

Betty sat up very straight on the divan and shook her head energetically. "My dear Cousin Richard, please disabuse your mind of any such notion. I am *not* going to be thrust forth into the cold world to satisfy your old-fogeyish ideas! It—it's perfectly absurd! Why shouldn't I remain here to-night, for goodness' sake? Isn't the house full of servants? I never heard anything so ridiculous! You're wretchedly inhospitable, to say the least."

"It isn't a question of hospitality," replied Richard, exasperated. "It—it's a matter of common decency. Besides, as you have voluntarily placed yourself in my—er—care, I am responsible for you to your parents."

"That's nonsense! But there, I have a perfectly good solution, Richard."

"I am relieved to hear it. It is—?"

"Why, since we mustn't remain here together—although, my dear Richard, I'd promise to be quite well-behaved—it occurs to me that it would be an easy matter for you to spend the night somewhere else."

"I?" he gasped.

"Certainly." And Betty smiled sweetly across at him.

"But—where in the world can I go?"

"Where in the world can I go?"

He turned to the window, and observed for some moments the well-kept lawn that spread away to the hedge and the tree-lined country road beyond.

"Very well," he said finally, with chill politeness. "We will arrange it so. I can doubtless find accommodation for the night in Amhurst. I believe there are rooms at the inn there, such as they are. Of course you realise, however, that your solution is not entirely satisfactory, since anyone not conversant with the real facts of the case

will presume that—er—I spent the night at home."

"Anyone knowing you well, Richard," responded Betty sweetly, "would never suspect such a thing."

"Possibly. Now, if you will excuse me, I have some work to attend to. Please make yourself comfortable, and ring for anything you want."

"What I want," said Betty sadly, "can't be had by ringing, I fear."

"Er—and what is it?" asked Richard suspiciously.

"A kind word," faltered Betty, her eyes hinting at tears.

Richard passed into the study, closing the door firmly behind him. Then came the sound of a key turning in a lock. Betty arose from the couch with a little quiet laugh and walked to a window.

"He'd have sworn in just another minute!" she murmured.

An hour later Richard opened the study door cautiously, and sighed with relief at finding the library deserted. He rattled the telephone hook impatiently, and indulged in many gruff "Hallos!" Finally: "Give me the hotel in Amhurst. I don't know the name of it. . . . Hallo! who is this? . . . Mc Clintok's Hotel, eh? Well, this is Mr. Richard Hollidge. . . . No, not College, Hollidge. H-o-l—. . . All right. I want a room to-night—Hallo! . . . I say, I want a room to-night at—. . . No, room—a room! . . . Yes, a room overnight. . . . Hallo! Do you hear that? A room for Mr. Hollidge to-night. . . . Yes. . . . Yes. . . . Naturally, a single room. Do you think I'm twins?"

Then a bell buzzed in the servants' hall, and a maid hurried in.

"Maggie, tell Curran to have the trap at the door at eight to take me to Amhurst."

"Oh, sir, there ain't anything happened, is there?"

"Happened? No, what should happen? I—er—I'm spending the night in the village, that's all."

"And," he assured himself bitterly as he climbed the stairs to dress for dinner, "it's enough!"

CHAPTER IV

DINNER at "The Hermitage" that evening was a quiet affair. Richard was studiously polite but uncommunicative. Betty, quite willing to let bygones be bygones, attempted for a while to maintain a one-sided conversation, but found the task too difficult, and subsided into silence with the arrival of the roast. Nevertheless, she ate a good dinner with apparent enjoyment. At the conclusion of the meal they adjourned ceremoniously to the porch out-

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side, and Betty presided over the coffee. Richard, after asking and receiving permission, lighted a cigar. There was a little breeze from the south that flickered the smoke and brought an enjoyable relief from the heat of the day. Afar off a whip-poor-will was sounding his plaintive song. Betty sighed contentedly.

"I think it's perfectly lovely here," she said. "And I know that I shall sleep like a top to-night. How does a top sleep, Richard?"

"I haven't the faintest idea," he replied. "If you were flippant you might have said tip-top. Do you take sugar?"

"Thanks, no."

"Don't get up! I'll hand it to you. There! Is it strong enough?"

"Quite, thank you."

Betty piled three cubes of sugar in a diminutive cup and trickled a few spoonfuls of coffee over them. Then, settling herself comfortably again and sipping at the concoction, "Richard," she asked, "do you just hate me?"

"Certainly not, Miss Lee."

"We-ell, you dislike me awfully, though, don't you?"

"I'm afraid I haven't—er——"

"Please don't say it! I know it's going to be something very disagreeable. When you say 'er' like that I know what to expect. You do dislike me. And I'm sorry. I wanted you to like me heaps. You see, you're the only man cousin I have."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. And a man cousin is so sort of satisfactory. He's just unrelated enough to be nice to you—if he likes you, of course—and just related enough not to be—silly. You see what I mean, don't you?"

"Dimly, I think."

"Yes. Now, you and I could be awfully good friends—that is, if you wanted to—and there wouldn't be any nonsense, would there?"

"Wouldn't there?" asked Richard politely.

"No. I mean— Well, you couldn't fall in love with me, could you?"

Richard smiled for the first time in hours. It was the faintest sort of a smile, but Betty found it encouraging.

"You couldn't, could you, Richard?" she insisted.

"My dear young lady——"

"Betty," she pleaded.

"Very well—my dear Miss Betty, your charms are undeniable, but, as you wisely observe, the—er—consanguinity——"

"Oh, Richard, I never did!"

"——between us happily precludes the possibility of the consequences you mention."

"Oh, dear, is it as bad as that?" she lamented. "Still, we're only second

cousins, and perhaps that might make a difference. On the whole, I'm glad we're seconds instead of firsts! Aren't you?"

"I can't truthfully say," replied Richard with a slight laugh, "that being termed a 'second' brings me any great amount of pleasure. It's—er—scarcely complimentary, is it?"

"Depends on what kind of a 'second' you are. Mrs. Martin refers to her present husband as her 'second,' and declares that second husbands, like second thoughts, are best. I should think it would be awfully funny to have a second husband while your first one was alive, shouldn't you?"

"Funny? H'm! Rather irregular, I'd say."

"At least, awkward? But Mrs. Martin doesn't seem to mind. She's great fun. You'd like her, Richard."

"I can hardly imagine it."

"You would, though. Will you have some more coffee?"

"No, thank you. I never take more than one cup."

"Oh, do! See how much there is left. Go on—chance it!"

"If it isn't impertinent, Miss Betty, I'd really like to know where you pick up the —er—somewhat unconventional expressions you use."

"Oh! 'Chance it,' you mean."

"And others."

"Are they awful? I suppose I—I hear them. If you don't like the slang, Richard, I'll try to cut it out—I mean not use it. What's that?"

"Curran bringing the trap 'round." He looked at his watch and scowled slightly. Then he glanced at his half-consumed cigar and settled back in his chair. After a moment Betty said:

"Richard, I wish you'd do something for me."

"If it is anything I may——"

"Don't go traipsing off there to-night. You'll be terribly uncomfortable in that hotel. I asked Sophie about it, and she said it was an awful place. You won't sleep, I'm sure."

"I don't expect to be extremely comfortable," he replied grimly.

"Then, don't go," she pleaded. "You know it's silly. And I'll—I'll apologise for being mean this afternoon, Richard. I'm sorry I said anything nasty. I am, really! You won't go, will you?"

"Please rest assured that I shouldn't if it were not necessary."

"Oh!" Betty subsided, studying him from the corners of her eyes.

"I—I shall be a little bit frightened at being left here alone in a strange house," she ventured presently.

"You should have considered that before," he replied calmly.

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"I did, only I thought you'd—you'd change your mind about going."

"I'm not likely to change my mind when it is once made up."

"No; I suppose not." Betty sighed.

He laid aside his cigar and pulled himself from his chair.

"Is it late? Must you go now? Couldn't you stay just a little longer? It's going to be so—so gruesome all alone here."

"The servants—"

"But I don't want to talk to the servants. And I must talk to someone. Couldn't you stay until—oh, just until half-past nine or ten? I'd be sleepy by that time. And it won't make a bit of difference to you."

He looked irresolutely at his watch, frowned, and pushed a button.

"Maggie, tell Curran, please, to take the trap back to the stable," he said. "I shan't want it for a while. I'll let him know when I'm ready."

"Now that was nice of you," said Betty gratefully. "Isn't it funny that when people can be nice they're not always nice?"

"Perhaps they'd be a little monotonous," replied Richard with a smile.

"Is that your reason?" she asked slyly.

He was silent a moment.

"I suppose I have seemed somewhat ungracious at times to-day, Miss Lee," he said apologetically. "I hope you will forgive me. The fact is, I—well, perhaps, as we used to say when I was a youngster, I got out of bed at the wrong side this morning."

"Oh, but it was quite my fault," said Betty eagerly. "I've been horridly trying. I didn't mean to be, but—but I was disappointed. I thought it was such a fine idea, popping in like this. I had it all arranged, just how I'd arrive, and what I'd say, and what you'd say, and—it wasn't a bit like it!"

"I'm sorry, really. How—er—how had you arranged it?"

"I'm afraid it sounds silly now," she answered hesitatingly. "I was going to get here just when you were finishing breakfast—breakfast with lots of strawberries and nice, thick, yellow, country cream. Don't you have strawberries, Richard?" she asked wistfully.

"I believe there are plenty of them growing in the garden," he replied, "but I seldom eat them."

"I love them! And you were going to get up from the table with your napkin in hand and say, 'Why, if it isn't Betty! Where the— Where under the sun did you come from?' And then you were going to kiss me. No, I suppose you couldn't have done that on account of being a 'second.' But you were going to be, oh! just awfully glad to see me, and Aunt

Letitia was going to say, 'Now sit down, child, and have some breakfast. You must be starving!' And I was going to eat bacon and eggs and drink a great big cup of nice hot coffee, and—and it was all going to be so jolly!"

"H'm! I see. Unfortunately we have breakfast at eight in the summer. And there were no strawberries. And Aunt Letitia wasn't here. I'm sorry it happened so badly, Miss Betty."

"Oh, but I don't care now, Richard, when you're nice to me. I suppose—I suppose you never ran away from your folks."

"I think not. I seem to have been a most unadventurous chap in my youth."

"Then you don't know the feeling I had yesterday when I found nobody at the Bradfords' house. It—it was a funny sensation. There I was, without anyone to go to. Our own house was closed, too, you know—servants off for the summer and not even a caretaker. Then I thought of you, Richard, and cheered up. You see, you are a relative, and relatives seemed pretty useful to me about that time. I don't mind confessing that for a while I wished myself back on the boat!"

"You were in rather a difficult predicament," said Richard sympathetically. "And I'm very glad you did think of me—us. And to-morrow, when dear Aunt Letitia returns, we can—er—settle just what's to be done."

"Yes," said Betty cheerfully. "And you won't go off and leave me all alone here to-night, will you, now that we're friends again?"

"I'm afraid our being friends again, as you phrase it, doesn't remove that necessity."

"O-oh!" she murmured disappointedly. "We-ell—" She was silent a minute. "Do you like music?" she asked.

"Very much."

"Would you like me to play to you? I can, you know."

"Why, thank you; but—er—"

"Do let me! Come, we'll go to the drawing-room and be cosy."

She held out one small hand, gaily insistent, and Richard, yielding to a sudden mood of frivolity, allowed himself to be pulled from his chair and led through the dining-room to the dimly-lighted apartment beyond.

She crossed to the piano and seated herself on the stool. "Perhaps you won't like my things; but you must pretend to."

He had doubts himself, but he murmured something polite. She began with a polonaise of Chopin, and Richard figuratively pricked up his ears. The girl could play, not merely well, but with feeling and sympathy and a certainty that surprised her audience. From Chopin, after a thoughtful question-

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ing of the keys, she played a minuet of Gahn's, and then, perhaps accepting its suggestion, followed it with a suite of old English dances, dainty and stately and quaint.

"Are you frantically bored?" she asked without turning.

"Far from it. You play excellently. Please go on."

"I haven't kept it up of late," she said apologetically, "and my memory is awful. What shall I play?" She looked tentatively toward the music cabinet. "Do you know this, Richard?"

Her fingers sought the keys again, and after a gay, brisk prelude her voice joined the piano, so softly, though, that he had to lean forward to catch the words.

"When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
'Give crowns and pounds
and guineas
But not your heart away:
Give pearls away and rubies
But keep your fancy free.'
But I was one-and-twenty—
No use to talk to me.

"When I was one-and-twenty
I heard him say again,
'The heart out of the bosom
Was never giv'n in vain:
'Tis paid with sighs a-plenty
And sold for endless rue.'
And I am two-and-twenty,
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true,
And I am two-and-twenty,
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true."

"No; I had never heard that," he said, when the last note had died away and she had turned with a questioning smile. "What is it?"

"When I was One-and-twenty," from Manney's 'Shropshire Lad' cycle."

The sound of wheels on the gravel came through the open windows. Richard looked at his watch and uttered an exclamation.

"What?" asked Betty.

"It's after ten—almost twenty minutes past. Curran has evidently tired of waiting for me. If you'll excuse me now for leaving you, I'll run up and change."

Speaking, he had reached the entrance to the hall. Betty, watching him from the piano-stool, saw him suddenly pause just



"Her fingers sought the keys again,
and after a gay, brisk prelude
her voice joined the piano."

Drawn
by
Charles Herrell.

beyond the portières and stiffen to sudden attention.

"Why, Aunt Letitia!" he exclaimed.

The door clicked to behind a tall woman of middle age whose thin, well-bred face, still eminently sweet and attractive, spoke eloquently of weariness. Behind her, Curran set down her bag and stood waiting.

"Will you give Curran some money, Richard, and let him pay the driver, please? No, my dear, I am not a ghost. London was so warm, and I simply couldn't bring myself to staying there overnight. So I had an early dinner and—and—"

Miss Dallen's voice faltered as her gaze,

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passing her nephew, encountered a startling apparition at the drawing-room door. She closed her eyes.

"—and took the seven-fifteen train."

She opened her eyes again. No, the apparition was still there! It even moved! She raised a hand weakly and pointed.

"Richard," she said distressedly, "is—is there anyone there?"

He turned and looked.

"Oh! I—I beg your pardon! This—is—"

A strange expression overspread Aunt Letitia's face, an expression that mingled swift relief, vast surprise, and dawning suspicion. The apparition, with a merry laugh, moved quickly across the floor.

"I am Betty Lee, Aunt Letitia." Aunt Letitia found herself limply shaking hands. "I'm Richard's cousin, you know." Aunt Letitia found herself nodding and murmuring. "And I've come to visit you." Aunt Letitia heroically summoned her wandering faculties. She bent and kissed the smiling face.

"Of course!" she said kindly. "So stupid of me, my dear, to be away when you arrived. I'm very glad to see you." Her gaze travelled toward the stairway. "And your mother? I presume she was too tired to wait up."

CHAPTER V

"COUSIN RICHARD!"

Richard's pen paused, and he raised his gaze from the paper to frown inquiringly at the closed door to the library. There was a knock.

"Cousin Richard, are you terribly busy?" asked a voice from beyond the locked portal.

"Er—I'm afraid I am just now."

"Then I won't stay but a moment."

After a second of irresolution Richard laid his pen down with a sigh, crossed the room, and opened the door. Betty, a pencil in one hand and a sheet of paper in the other, entered.

"I'm so sorry to disturb you," she announced with a radiant smile of apology, "but Aunt Letitia thinks—Oh! what a nice big room!" She stopped just inside the door and gazed about her. "But—isn't it awfully bare?"

Richard closed the door. "Possibly," he replied briefly.

Betty shot a look at his countenance. "I won't stay, Richard. You see, Aunt Letitia and I have been having a nice long talk. Isn't she a perfect dear?"

"Er—quite so."

"Oh, she is! She says she's just bursting with joy to have me here!"

"Indeed? You—er—you're certain she used those words?"

"N-no; but that's what she meant. May I sit down?"

"Of course. I beg your pardon."

Betty ensconced herself in a severe and angular armchair with a grimace of distaste. "Don't you ever have any *cuddly chairs?*" she asked. "Well, let me see. Oh, we were talking about Aunt Letitia. Well, Aunt Letitia says she thinks I ought to write to Dad and Mum immediately and tell them just where I am."

"I quite agree with her."

"Yes, of course. And I shall cable them too. But there's no hurry about that, for they won't get to New York for four days yet at the earliest. When I do cable I shall ask them to send my trunks straight back. How long do you think it ought to take, Richard?"

"I really can't say. Possibly a fortnight after they get your cablegram."

"But that's awful! Well, I'll simply have to buy new things. And now about the letter. Aunt Letitia and I looked up the sailings, and the *Aurania* leaves to-morrow noon. Aunt Letitia says that if I get a letter posted here now it ought to catch the boat. So I've been trying to write it, but it's awfully hard work, and I thought perhaps you'd help me. Will you?"

"Help you to write your letter?"

"Yes." Betty nodded, smiling her sweetest. "It will take but a few minutes. I never write very long letters. I—I just try to express what I have to say briefly and succinctly."

"An excellent plan," said Richard with a slight smile. "Still, it seems to me that you should be able to express yourself briefly and succinctly without my assistance."

"But I can't! I've been trying for half an hour. And it's almost eleven o'clock already." She jumped up and crossed quickly to the big desk. "Bring another chair," she commanded. She seated herself in Richard's place, calmly pushed aside his manuscript, and tried the nib of the pen on her thumbnail. "Now, you dictate, and I'll write," she announced, dipping the pen in ink.

"But—er—look here," began Richard blankly, seating himself beside her. "I don't know what you want to say! I haven't run away from my parents!"

Betty tapped the end of the pen between two very small, very white rows of teeth and observed him reflectively. "Then, I'll dictate and you write," she said finally. "But you must help me." She passed the pen to him.

"Of course," he said, "you understand that you'll have to copy it out in your own writing?"

"I suppose so," she sighed. "But never mind. The principal thing is to get it com-

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posed. Now, then—let—me—see. Begin 'Dearest Dad and Mum.' Have you got that down? . . . Let me see. What funny, printy, little writing! I wish you could see my writing! It's perfectly terrible. Dad pretends he can't read it. 'Dearest Dad and Mum—' Come to think of it, Richard, I believe we'd better write this to Dad. Start again and write 'Dear old Dadums.'"

"Dear old"— I beg your pardon?"

"Dadums: D-a-d-u-m-s." I always call him that when I want to make a hit. Of course he will know that, but it doesn't matter. 'I hope you had a pleasant trip across. I am quite well and miss you a great deal. But I realise that you will both have a more enjoyable trip—' I used 'trip,' didn't I? 'A more enjoyable visit without me to bother you. I shall be quite all right here at home. As you will see by this paper, I am visiting my cousin, Richard Hollidge, and his aunt, Miss Dallen, at "The Hermitage," Amhurst. It is a most charming place, and everybody is very kind to me and so glad to have me with them.'"

Betty shot a sly glance at Richard, but that gentleman's face remained non-committal; and if his pen faltered Betty did not see it.

"I was going to the Bradfords', but found they had left town. So I came here and like it very much. For the present you may address me here. My plans are not yet—not yet—perfected. Perhaps I shall join the Parkinsons in Scotland if I can find out where they are." Now, what else, Richard?"

"Possibly something in the way of—er—contrition would be allowable in the circumstances," he replied dryly.

"Contrition? Oh, you mean about running away? N-no; you see, I went into that thoroughly in the letter I wrote the night before last. There's no use recalling unpleasant things, is there? Shall I say that you wish to be remembered to them?"

"Certainly; my kindest regards to them."

"Oh, wait a minute! I hope by the time this reaches you you will have sent my trunks back, because I haven't a thing to put on. If you like you can send Higgins back with them, although I shan't need her."

"Who, pray, is Higgins?" asked Richard.

"My maid. You see, I couldn't run away with her too, because I was afraid if I took her into the secret she would tell Mum. And she would have, too—the deceitful thing! I hope they don't send her. Write: 'I think it would be a nice plan to let Higgins visit her folks in America. She was always talking about going home to see her people, and, maybe, it would be a good plan to let her have a jolly big dose of it.'

There, that ought to settle Higgins! Now write: 'Please cable the office to send me some money at once, because I'm flat'—no, 'because I'm quite out of funds. I hope you and Mum will have a fine time and come home feeling fine and fit. My cousin says I am to present his very warmest regards and—and—'" (Betty hesitated and cast an anxious look at the scribe) "'and tell you how delighted he is to have me with him—and Aunt Letitia.' I think we'd better get Aunt Letitia in there, too."

"I think it would be advisable," murmured Richard.

"Now write: 'Much love from your affectionate daughter Betty.' Oh, dear! what a lot I've written! Do you really think it's necessary for me to copy it, Richard? Dad could read it so much easier as it is; your writing is so very neat and plain."

"Considering that it is your letter I think you'd better copy it."

"We-ell, all right. Is there anything else you can think of to say? You wouldn't try to make it more emphatic about Higgins, would you? I suppose I'd better not, for Dad might take it into his head that I didn't want her. And if he did, it would be horribly like him to send her. So that's all. And thank you very much. I don't know how I'd ever have got it written without your help, Richard."

Richard grunted.

"Oh, but you did help, really! Now I'll copy this, and then Aunt Letitia and I are going to drive over to the village to post it. Will you come too?"

"Thanks, but I think not. I—er—had some dim notion of doing a little writing this morning."

"But the morning's as good as gone. Do come!"

"My dear young lady," he replied sarcastically, "the announcement may come as a surprise to you, but nevertheless it is a fact that I am supposed to be engaged in the labour of—er—writing a book."

"Oh! Then you won't come." Betty picked up the sheet of manuscript upon which he had been writing. "'Having before his mind the precise object of inquiry,'" she read with a puzzled brow, "'and having also stated—' What's it about, Richard? Is it a novel?"

"It is a work on English Composition."

"Oh, how nice! I should love to read it. When will it be printed in a book?"

"At the present rate of progress," replied Richard glumly, "about next Christmas."

"You mean, because I interrupted you?" asked Betty, untroubled. "Oh, but of course I'll never do it again. You see, Aunt Letitia has been telling me about it. She says you must have everything very

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quiet from nine till one, and that no one must go near your study. She advised me not to come."

"And so you came?"

"Yes." She laughed softly as he held the door open for her. "Poor Aunt Letitia! She's dreadfully afraid of you, isn't she?"

"I was not aware that I inspired her with fear."

Betty smiled wickedly. "It does sound absurd, doesn't it? Good-bye. If you change your mind about coming with us—"

"Thank you, but—"

Betty, half-way across the library, clapped her hands to her ears. "I know! You never change your mind; so careless of me to forget!"

CHAPTER VI

"ANYWAY, I made you work," said Betty in triumph, dropping her racket and subsiding on the bench at the side of the court. It was the fourth day of her visit, and she had beguiled Richard into a game of tennis. After yielding to defeat in the first two sets, she had managed to carry the third to deuce games, being finally beaten 7-5. "And if I had something to play in besides this"—indicating the white serge skirt borrowed from Aunt Letitia—"and these"—holding up for inspection one brown canvas shoe which she had bought in the village—"I could do better."

"You play a very good game," acknowledged Richard, mopping his face with his handkerchief.

"I won a be-oo-tiful silver cup at school once. If it wasn't for that beastly slice of yours, Richard, I think I'd stand some show. Couldn't you teach me that?"

"That would be revealing trade secrets," laughed Richard.

"Richard," she said presently.

"Yes?"

"Would you be—oh, just simply heart-broken if I went away?"

He looked at her suspiciously. "Why do you ask?"

"Because," she answered gravely, "I'm going."

"Going away! What for?" he asked, startled.

"Reasons, Richard; lots of them. For one, I don't think you care to have me here very much. I bother you."

"My dear Betty—"

"Yes, I do. I can see it. I interfere with your work. And I do things you don't approve of. I use slang, and—and I don't construct my sentences properly."

"Nonsense!"

"And yesterday when I put that bowl of flowers on your desk you took them off."

"I—er—appreciated them, really," he

stammered guiltily, "but I'm not used to having flowers about—"

"But I know that you'd be able to work better if I went away. Besides, I've been here four days now."

"But—er—where are you going if you leave here? Have you heard from your friends, the—the—?"

"Bradfords? No, not yet. You see, Richard, I haven't written yet."

"Then I certainly think you'd better stay here, Betty."

"And you don't want me to go away?"

"Not unless you wish to."

"And if I did wish to, and went, would you be sorry?"

"I would naturally miss you," he replied vaguely.

"Then I won't go," she said radiantly. "I wasn't, any way."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I mean, I wasn't going to stay. Just to London to buy some clothes."

"Oh!" Richard smiled.

"Aunt Letitia is going with me, tomorrow; and we're going to have a perfectly gorgeous time shopping. I've simply got to have clothes! Lots of clothes," she added dreamily.

"Well?"

"Well, you see"—she studied her feet distastefully—"I—I haven't any money, Richard."

"Oh, yes, I see. I shall be very glad to supply that deficiency. How much does a lot of clothes cost?"

"Well, could you let me have—fifty pounds?"

"What! Great Scott, Betty, are you going to buy out Bond Street?"

"No, but I need so many things, Cousin Richard! Just think, I haven't anything at all. Imagine yourself without anything at all!"

"H'm! I'd rather not. However, if you must have fifty pounds, I'll see what can be done. I'm afraid I haven't that much on hand, but I can give you a cheque, and you can get it cashed in town."

"Thanks. You're a dear. And, Richard—"

"Go on; tell me the worst."

"It's just about dinner."

"What about dinner? Do you mean that you want another fifty for that?"

"Silly! Of course not! But Aunt Letitia and I will be all alone, and I thought perhaps it would be nice to have Mr. Craigie meet us. Do you think it's quite proper for women to dine alone at an hotel?"

"If they behave themselves. I think I can answer for Aunt Letitia."

Betty laughed softly. "But it would be nicer to have a man, wouldn't it? You—you don't think you'd like to go with us, do you?"

"I do not," he answered promptly.

BETTY UNINVITED

"I was afraid you wouldn't. So I thought of Mr. Craigie."

"Only, of course," he said slyly, "as an after-thought."

Betty smiled. "I'm glad you approve, Richard. I'll telephone him when we get in town. And in case anything should come up about—about his coming here, Richard?"

"Eh? Oh, I see. You'd like to have me invite him?"

"Well, he might expect it, mightn't he? And it would be so awkward if Aunt Letitia and I couldn't say anything—if we had to. Of course, Richard, if you'd rather not have him— Still, maybe you could get more work done if you had someone to take me off your hands. Don't you think so?"

"My dear young lady, if you want that idiot up here, pray invite him; but don't, please don't, try to make me believe that my happiness and future prosperity depend upon it."

"Then you don't want him?" asked Betty dolefully.

"Want him? Why—er—confound him, not—that is, if you want him—"

"I don't unless you do," she answered, disappointed.

"Tell him," said Richard dryly, "that I shall esteem it a great favour if he will honour us with his presence for—how long?"

"We-ell," said Betty weightily, "you can't very well ask him for less than three days, can you? Suppose we invite him from Friday to Monday?"

"Very well."

"And then if you wanted him to stay longer you could ask him, couldn't you?"

"I might."

"That's settled, then, isn't it?"

"Look here, Betty, I hope you won't let anything occur between you and Tom Craigie while your people are away."

"What sort of anything?" asked Betty, her eyes dancing.

"Why, I mean—an engagement. It wouldn't be quite the thing, you know."

"Wouldn't it?" she asked demurely.

"It certainly would not," he replied shortly. "Besides, as you are under my charge—"

"Richard, you're not jealous, are you? You—you don't want to marry me myself, do you?"

"Goodness, no!" he ejaculated.

Betty's laugh rang delightedly. "But—but you needn't bite my head off," she gasped.

CHAPTER VII

"I'M so glad," said Aunt Letitia the next morning, when, with the carriage at the door, she waited for Betty to come down, "that you've invited Mr. Craigie, Richard."

"That I have!"

"Why, yes; you have, haven't you? I mean, you are going to." Betty said—

"I suppose," replied Richard thoughtfully, "I could claim undue coercion, or whatever the legal phrase is, but I fancy it is hardly worth while."

"What are you talking about, dear? I was speaking of Mr. Craigie. Betty says you want me to ask him out here for a week-end."

"It is the dearest wish of my life," he responded gravely.

The carriage rolled away at a little after eight, Betty waving farewell all the length of the drive. Later, when Richard retired to the study and seated himself at his desk, a great and marvellous silence was settled over the house. Assuring himself that today, at least, he would be able to make progress, he lighted his pipe, drew his manuscript to him, and ran through his notes. Presently he selected a soberly bound volume from the rack beside him and opened it where a marker lay. Then he relighted his pipe. Finally he pushed his notes away and leaned back in his chair, his hands behind his head, and puffed big clouds of grey smoke toward the ceiling. Time passed.

He aroused himself suddenly with a scowl, and leaned over the book once more. In the act of turning a page, his eyes wandered to a window, and he saw that the weather had grown cloudy. He hoped it wouldn't rain. Of course, they could take a taxi and do their shopping, but he fancied it would be rather unpleasant. He glanced at the desk clock. Why, they were half-way there by now. Good gracious! Where had the time gone? Nearly eleven, and he hadn't touched pen to paper! Resolutely he laid aside his pipe, and frowned, absorbed in the virgin sheet of paper. At last he wrote half a dozen lines.

After all, even should it rain here the weather might be quite fair in London—he found his mind once more astray—and doubtless Betty would display enough sense to purchase a pair of practical shoes, and not go running around over wet footpaths in those absurd, paper-soled pumps. And in any case it was not his place to worry!

He relighted his pipe. What was the matter with the place to-day? The silence was uncanny! It—it got on his nerves. He tossed down his pen and walked to the hearth, and there, his back to the fireplace, frowned at the grey world while the desk clock ticked off the precious minutes.

Later he returned to work, and, having read what he had written, scrunched the sheet up disgustedly and tossed it away. What absolute drivel! And then, while he was still striving for a fresh start, a far-off chiming announced that it was luncheon-time.

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The rain came just as he had seated himself at the table—a slow, soft, persistent drizzle that blotted out the world beyond the garden hedge. With some thought of making up for another wasted forenoon, he returned to the study after his solitary luncheon, and dipped his pen again. But after staring at an empty sheet of paper for a quarter of an hour, he pushed back his chair and strode to the porch door.

The garden looked forlorn. There was no temptation in that direction. For an hour he mooned about the library, rearranging some books, trying to read. At four, donning a rain-coat and a cap, and seizing his heaviest stick, he splashed off down the driveway and spent an hour tramping over the wet, soppy countryside.

Dinner was a dreary meal. After coffee he went to the piano and tried to pick out the tune of a song Betty had sung the night of her arrival. Failing in that, he strove to recall some of the songs he had sung at college. In the middle of one of them Maggie appeared on the scene, looking vastly concerned, to ask if he had called her, and he stopped in disgust. Having finished his one cigar, he deliberately lighted a second. That lasted him until he could with decency ascend to his room, and with the soft patter of the rain in his ears he at last fell asleep.

"Curran, I want you to drive over and meet the eleven-forty train from London," directed Richard the next morning. "Miss Dallen and Miss Lee will be on it."

This was at nine o'clock.

"She shouldn't expect me to sacrifice a whole morning's work in order to meet her at the station," he reflected. "Curran will do quite as well. Besides, she's capable of bringing Tom back with her to-day, and I'm blessed if I'll drive away over there to welcome that idiot!"

This was at ten o'clock.

And then, at two and a half minutes past eleven, he hurried to the bell in a panic and summoned a maid. "Has Curran gone yet, Maggie?" he demanded.

"No, sir; he's getting ready."

"Tell him—tell him I have decided to drive to the station myself."

The train was nearly twenty minutes late, and Richard, alternately soothng the chestnut cob and puffing at his pipe, scorned himself for his weakness and wished himself at home. When at last the long train drew wearily into the station, he almost hoped that Betty and Aunt Letitia were not on it.

But they were; at least, Aunt Letitia had arrived, but Betty was not visible. It was only when she was laughing at him that he awoke to the fact that the radiant young person in a suit of white ratine and a wonderful hat with a pert cockade of Natier blue in front was Betty.

"Richard, we've got dozens of bags and bundles! Do you think we can get them all in?" She was already handing them to him, and while he was piling the floor in front with them, Aunt Letitia arrived with more.

"Why, Richard," she exclaimed, "how nice of you to meet us! Is anything the matter with Curran?"

"Nothing, apart from his usual laziness," he replied. "I'd be glad to get out and assist you, but if I did this animal would bolt. I can take a few more bundles in front here. I hope you had a successful trip."

"We had the time of our lives!" declared Betty. "Didn't we, Aunt Letitia? And just wait, Richard, until you see the gowns I've bought!"

"I fancy I'm seeing one of them now," he answered, searching the platform apprehensively for Tom Craigie.

"Oh, this! Do you like it? It was ridiculously cheap, wasn't it, Aunt Letitia? But do you like my hat? Don't you think it's sweet? He will like my big one, won't he, Aunt Letitia?"

Richard condescendingly approved of the hat, and the cob waltzed his way out of the village and home. In the hall, while Curran was transferring bags and parcels to the maids, Betty held out a pair of white-gloved hands to Richard.

"You haven't once said you were glad to have us back," she challenged.

Richard took the hands gingerly. "Is it necessary to say it?" he asked.

Betty nodded emphatically. "Very, when you don't even look at it! And, Richard, I haven't told you!"

"What?" he asked.

"He's coming on Friday, to stay until Monday! Isn't that nice?"

"Very," he replied. "I suppose you mean Tom Craigie?"

"Of course. And I am to telephone him whether it is all right about the stable, Richard?"

"The stable? I had thought of putting him up in the house."

"Silly! The car, of course! I told him I thought there would be plenty of room for it. There is, isn't there?"

"Good gracious! Is he bringing that thing here?"

"Don't you want him to? I thought it would be jolly to go around and see some of the places, Richard. Why, we could go over to Lenox for luncheon, and—and see everything! Don't you really want him to bring his car?"

"I don't care what he does; only I don't see where he's going to keep it."

"Isn't there room in the stable? Would it hurt if the trap stood outside, Richard, just for two or three days? Of course, if it would—"

BETTY UNINVITED

"Not at all. Tell him to bring it along, and we'll do the best we can for him."

"You're a duck!" declared Betty.

At luncheon Betty was again transformed. A cream-white serge skirt with a tiny black stripe, a blouse of white voile, hand-embroidered and tucked, white stockings and shoes, and a white leather belt. She laughed enjoyably at Richard's look of bewilderment, and dropped him a curtsy at the doorway.

"Well?" she asked.

"It's rather breath-taking," he acknowledged. "When—er—when do you change again? I want to be prepared."

"Not until dinner-time. Still, if anyone should drop in for afternoon tea, I have a perfect dream of a gown I could get into. I wish you could have seen me trying on yesterday evening, Richard."

"My dear!" murmured Aunt Letitia.

"Oh, well, you know what I mean. I wish you could have been in the next room and seen the perfect procession of errand girls and fitters! There were dozens! Didn't we have a perfectly gorgeous time, Aunt Letitia?"

"It was quite exciting, dear."

"Exciting! It was just like a wedding! And oh, Richard, before I forget it, I owe Aunt Letitia eight pounds!"

"You mean you spent that fifty?"

"Like that—pouf! It didn't last any time, my dear man. Things are frightfully high at this season. Why, what do you suppose I paid for this blouse, Richard? And you can see it's the simplest sort of a thing."

"I haven't the least idea, Betty."

"Oh, well, give a guess! You must know something about the prices of things."

"Ah, ten—no, two guineas?"

"Richard!" she exclaimed reproachfully. "Why, look at all these dear, tiny little tucks! Two pounds eighteen, Richard! Isn't that perfectly absurd? I really needed half a dozen, but at that price I simply couldn't afford more than three. One of the others is really sweet—it cost three guineas, I think. I've got the dreamiest evening gown, Richard! It's a model, and I think it was absurdly cheap at fifteen guineas, don't you, Aunt Letitia?"

"I'm sure it was, my dear. But do eat luncheon now. Richard would much rather see your things than hear about them, I'm sure."

CHAPTER VIII

DURING the next few days Curran made periodical trips to the station and brought back oblong pasteboard boxes of various sizes, and Betty and Aunt Letitia, assisted by Sophie, spent much time in secret session. And ever so often Richard was called upon to view and ad-

mire, and in the course of time became able to distinguish chiffon broadcloth from charmeuse, and a reverie from a guimpe.

About this time a cable message reached Betty from New York. She showed it to Richard directly she had read it.

"Trunks left to-day. Both well. Writing. Love.—FATHER."

"H'm!" Richard commented. "It's difficult to discern from this whether your father is still angry or has become reconciled."

"Oh, reconciled," said Betty. "Why, that's quite an affectionate message from Dad! It's all right now. You'll see. I do wish, though, I knew whether they've sent Higgins to visit the Higginses!"

After dinner that evening, Betty, who was reading the country paper, and sipping a cup of sugar melted in coffee, suddenly exclaimed, "So that's where they are!"

"And who might they be?" asked Aunt Letitia.

"The Bradfords. They're at Burfield. They've taken a cottage. I remember that Nancy said last year they thought of trying Burfield next. You see, they've tried almost every other place. Well, the things I've bought will do very well until my trunks come, won't they? Is Burfield very dressy?"

"Then you think of visiting these friends of yours?" asked Aunt Letitia.

"Oh, of course. I can't stay here all the summer, you dear thing! I only invited myself for a fortnight, and that will soon be up. I must write Nancy to-morrow. Please, somebody, help me to remember."

Aunt Letitia shot an inquiring glance at Richard. He was thoughtfully watching a cloud of smoke writhing through the window. The weather had turned cooler, and they had had their coffee in the drawing-room.

"I'm sure, Betty," said Aunt Letitia finally, receiving no assistance from her nephew—"I'm sure we'd be very glad to have you stay here as long as you can stand us. Certainly, we can't equal Burfield for gaiety, but if you don't mind our humdrum ways, dear—"

"Of course Betty's tired of them, Aunt," said Richard stiffly. "I, for one, don't blame her."

"That's a mean, horrid thing to say, Richard. I just love it here, and you know it, but I don't intend to sponge all the summer on you."

"Not when you can get the gaiety of Burfield, evidently," he replied.

Betty flushed, opened her mouth to speak, caught back the first word on the tip of her tongue, and finished her sugar and coffee. Then she arose quietly and passed into the hall.

"You shouldn't have hurt her feelings so, Richard," said Aunt Letitia. "After all,

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it's not to be wondered at that she should prefer a—a gayer place, dear."

"That is only what I observed," replied Richard coldly. "So why should she take offence?"

"But the way you said it, Richard, wasn't—" She paused. The front door slammed gently. "I wonder if she put anything on?"

Richard made no answer.

"Tom Craigie comes to-morrow, doesn't he?" he asked indifferently a minute later.

"Yes, some time in the afternoon. He said it would depend on the road."

"I wish he'd get lost!" muttered Richard.

Ten minutes later he finished his cigar, arose, frowned over some music on the top of the piano, and presently strode from the room. Aunt Letitia listened. A door closed noisily. Aunt Letitia nodded, and went on with her embroidery.

There was a chill in the air, and only once or twice had the moon peered out from behind the clouds. It was in hiding when Richard stepped out on the path which led along the front of the house. He had swung a coat over his arm and donned a cap. He felt certain that he would find Betty in the garden, and so he passed through the white gate and looked about through the half-darkness. He was on the point of calling to her, when a blur of lighter tone took shape against the shadows of the study porch. She was seated on the edge of the porch. He walked across to her in silence.

"Aunt Letitia is afraid you will take cold," he announced, as he stood over her and held out the coat. "You had better put this on."

"I am quite warm, thank you," she replied in tones matching his in chilly politeness. Nevertheless, she accepted the coat, and slipped it over her shoulders. Having performed his ostensible errand, there seemed no reason for lingering. On the other hand, to retreat gracefully seemed even more difficult. He thought of dropping some caution against remaining out too long, and then stepping across the porch and into the dimly lighted study. Fortunately, however, he remembered in time that the porch door was locked from the inside. To go back the way he had come, leaving her alone out there in the darkness, seemed indefensible. Besides, he really wanted to render an apology for his churlishness. The silence lengthened. Richard remained standing in the path, awkward and dumb. Once he thought she turned her head and looked up at him, but it was too dark to be certain of that. A dozen remarks suggested themselves and were repulsed as insane. Of course, it was perfectly feasible to ask her forgiveness in so many words and retire with dignity, but

some demon of perversity ruled him tonight.

"Won't you sit down?" she asked at last, sweetly polite.

"No, thank you. I'm going indoors," he replied stiffly.

Silence settled down again. The moon crept out from under a pile of purple-black clouds, bathed the world in silver light for a moment, and was again obscured. Suddenly little stifled sounds came to him from the figure on the porch—sounds which Richard, with a quick, dismayed softening of his mood, told himself were sobs. She was crying. What a brute he had been! Impulsively he reached down and laid a hand on her shoulder. He could feel it shake under the rough surface of the coat. The sounds, as though defying restraint, became louder.

"Betty!" he said softly. "Please!"

Then his hand fell from the shoulder, and he stepped back, surprised, suspicious. Was it possible that—that—

It was. Richard turned on his heel and walked down the path and through the gate. And as he passed the corner of the house the sound of laughter, bubbling, merry, and unrestrained, fell upon his outraged ears.

The next morning you would have thought, from Betty's attitude, that nothing at all had happened. Such a well-behaved Betty! Prompt to the minute at breakfast. So attentive to Aunt Letitia's wants. So concerned about Richard's appetite, which was not of the best this morning. In short, so angelic that Aunt Letitia openly beamed upon her and secretly wondered, while Richard, nursing his wounded dignity, repelled all her advances with polite hauteur.

"Mr. Craigie will have a splendid day for his trip," observed Aunt Letitia.

"Won't he!" agreed Betty. "It's a perfectly wonderful morning. The air's like-like—what is it you liken air to, Richard, when you want to say something nice about it?"

"I really can't say."

"Well, whatever it is, it's just like it," continued Betty, undeterred. "I've been in the garden with Curran. I picked the daintiest bunch of flowers for your study, Richard."

"Thank you, but you should not have bothered."

"Oh, but I love to pick flowers. Curran says I should cut them, but I didn't have anything to cut them with, you see. He tried very hard to be cross, but I wouldn't let him. Curran's a funny old dear, isn't he?"

After breakfast, when Richard, having glanced through a paper, started toward the study, Betty intervened.

"You're not going to work yet, are you?" she asked. "Why, it's only a little after nine."

BETTY UNINVITED

"It will be half-past before I get started," he answered.

"Well, but couldn't you come out just a minute? Curran is going to mark the tennis-court. Let's go and see him do it."

"Really, Betty, I thought you understood by this time that the morning is my time to work. Now, please, don't ask again."

"You're still angry, aren't you?" she asked, studying his face with anxious eyes. "Richard, I'm sorry I laughed."

"It's of no consequence," he replied indifferently.

"I—I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, really. But—but it was so funny, you standing there and not saying anything, and I sitting there and not saying anything."

"It was undoubtedly a very humorous situation," he returned dryly. "Unfortunately, my sense of humour is—er—apparently deficient."

A smile stole into her eyes as he turned away. "I shouldn't say *apparently*, Richard," she answered.

His first act when the door closed behind him was resolutely to seize upon a vase of pink roses which adorned his desk and transfer it to the distant mantel. After that he stood for quite five minutes and glowered at the offending blossoms. Then he seated himself at the desk, arranged his work before him, dipped his pen in the ink, and addressed the clock sternly.

"She's in such good spirits because he's coming this afternoon," he muttered.

For some unaccountable reason he performed an excellent morning's work.

Tom Craigie rolled up the drive at four o'clock in a big grey touring car, with a nerve-racking shriek of an electric horn.

As Richard shook hands with him, he wondered at the difficulty he experienced in making his "Hallo, Tom! Glad to see you!" sound sincere. They had been friends ever since their second year in a preparatory school, and Richard had always been



"'No, I won't be said good night to like that,' Betty declared"—p. 177.

Drawn by
Charles Horrell.

genuinely fond of Tom, even though he disapproved of the other's frivolity and lack of earnestness. But now he realised that he was dimly resenting Tom's advent; resenting, too, the fervour of the welcome accorded him by the others. It was as though a thin film of ice had coated the old friendliness.

As Curran saw to Tom's kit-bag, and the new-comer responded gaily to the ladies'

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questions, Richard found himself viewing his friend with a new interest—an interest at once critical and slightly hostile. Good-looking Tom certainly was. Not quite as tall as Richard, a little broader, a little "better-fed," to use a convenient phrase, he looked also less hard and well-conditioned.

The two men, followed by Curran with the kit-bag, went up to Tom's room. Tom tossed a dust-coat and a pair of goggles on to the bed, and turned enthusiastically to his host as Curran closed the door behind him.

"Richard, you lucky dog, she's a stunner!" he exclaimed. "Good heavens, man, why did you never tell me you had a cousin like that? Think of the years I've been wasting, eh?"

"Not wasting, Tom," replied Richard. "Or, at least, you've not been quite idle."

"The things you allude to, Richard, are gone, forgotten; they never were! And I stick to wasted. Honest, old man, she's the nicest girl I ever met. And dance—goodness! Well, how are you, anyway? Looking a bit ragged, aren't you? By Jove! I'm glad to be here, old Sobersides!"

"Did you have a good run?"

"Fair. Had a flat tyre and lost twenty-five minutes. Made up for it, though, afterwards. I did forty right along between towns. Awful lot of towns, though. Ought to be a law against having 'em so thick. Throw me a clean shirt, will you? Any one will do. Let's have the green and yellow; that's sort of classy—what? Want to take a ride after a while? It's a ripping day."

"Not for me, thanks. Perhaps the ladies would like to go. I've got some letters to write before dinner."

Richard saw the others off in the car half an hour later, and then roamed into the library, feeling strangely out of sorts. He selected a book from a shelf, examined it inside and out absent-mindedly, and jammed it back into place. In heaven's name, he asked himself, why had he elected to remain at home? Why shouldn't he have joined the party? Of course, there were letters to write—there always were; but none demanded immediate attention. He suddenly realised that ever since yesterday evening he had been behaving like a sulky child. There was nothing decidedly wrong with him. Perhaps Aunt Letitia was right, and he did need a change. If he didn't feel—more rational to-morrow, he would run away for a week. Having reached that conclusion, he shut himself in the study and wrote two notes of small importance, subsequently perching them ostentatiously on top of the letter-box in the hall instead of in it, that the others might see that his excuse had been valid.

Betty appeared for dinner that evening in a new gown, a turquoise creation of velveteen and chiffon that was eminently be-

coming. Richard had never seen her look quite as she did to-night. She had swathed the mass of her red-brown hair about her small head in smooth swirls that added a new piquancy to the adorable face beneath, and, it seemed, a new sparkle to the violet eyes. Her voice, too; her laugh, that was like the throaty gurgle of a silver stream over golden pebbles, held, to Richard's ears at least, a little note of triumph that was strange to him. Tom Craigie paid his court openly, honestly, assiduously. The repast went merrily. Richard, dimly conscious of a novel excitement within him, forgot to be sulky or pedantic. Tom had a budget of new stories which he told well and without dragging them in; Aunt Letitia, looking absurdly young, laughed and bantered frivolously; and Betty—well, Betty was more Betty than ever!

After coffee Betty went to the piano, and Tom, never more than a yard away, hung over her. She demanded a song, and pulled over the music until something was found that they could agree on. After that Tom was the star. Later Betty induced Aunt Letitia to play dance music. Then the rugs were kicked helter-skelter aside, and Tom and Betty, and subsequently Richard and Betty, waltzed until they were forced to seek the coolness of the porch.

CHAPTER IX

Tom remained until the following Wednesday. Then he reluctantly tore himself away and disappeared in a cloud of dust and to a farewell symphony on the horn. That afternoon Betty received two letters, one from her father and one from Nancy Bradford. Mr. Lee wrote that he hoped Betty wasn't making a nuisance of herself where she was, that he should have something to say to her when he returned (Betty merely laughed at that and said "Dear old Dadums!"), that her trunks were on the way, Higgins was visiting relatives, the office would honour her demands for money up to a couple of hundred pounds, her mother was well, and he had had a touch of rheumatism.

The other letter was less concise and rather more italicised. The gist of it was that Betty was an old darling duck, and that she was to pay them a visit at once—immediately—at once—and stay just as long as she could.

"So you see," said Betty, folding the epistle up and tucking it with the first one into her belt, "your troubles are about over, Cousin Richard. I think I shall go on Friday."

"Suppose," he said between jest and earnest, "we don't want you to go, Betty?"

"I—I don't think I want to go, either," she murmured wistfully. "I've had such a

BETTY UNINVITED.

good time, Richard. It's all been as nice and jolly as—as anything could be."

"I'm afraid it's been dull—some of it," he amended, recalling the last five days.

"It's been lovely." She nodded her head at the nearest faun. "Ask him. He knows. I've told him so often. I've told him lots of things, Richard. Once"—she paused and cast a side glance up at him, and laughed under her breath—"once I whispered a secret in his ear, and he promised never to tell it to a soul."

"He will tell me," said Richard. "He tells me all his secrets."

Betty's eyes narrowed, and the bubbling laugh rang out. She swung her feet gaily. "Not this one, Richard. If—if he did tell you, you'd be—oh, but you'd be surprised! Shocked, too, I suppose. And I wonder"—the laughter died away, and an oddly speculative expression crept into her face—"I wonder if you'd care."

"Yes, I know I should."

She studied his face musingly. "Oh, well," she said finally, with half a sigh, "he will never blab."

"I'm never to know this secret, then?" he asked.

"Never—I think. Perhaps, though. Who knows? Oh, what nonsense I'm talking!"

As though to atone for her momentary dejection in the afternoon, Betty was very Betty in the evening. She went to the piano while Aunt Letitia and Richard were still sipping their coffee, and banged out all the gay tunes she could remember, sometimes singing, sometimes whistling the song. (Betty had difficulty with her whistling, and the result was more amusing than musical.) Richard asked her to sing "When I was One-and-twenty," but Betty shook her head emphatically. Finally, with a last grand crash, she let her hands fall into her lap and swung herself slowly around on the bench.

"I'm going to bed," she announced firmly.

"To bed!" exclaimed Aunt Letitia in alarm. "Are you ill, dear?"

"I have a headache," replied Betty. "Good night, Aunt Letitia. Good night—Dick!"

Her laugh came back to them from the hall, but somehow it sounded not quite convincing. Richard, beginning to understand his trouble, smothered a sigh.

"She misses him," he told himself.

But the next morning it was the old Betty again—Betty of smiles and of laughter. After breakfast, she took Richard's paper away from him and dragged him out of doors and across the damp lawn, "to smell the morning." Richard, who had passed none too restful a night, was inclined to be silent. His companion, her cheeks like pale roses and her violet eyes aglare with laughter and sunlight, had no such inclination.

"Richard, you're not going to work today—my last day with you!"

"I'm afraid I must," he smiled.

"I shan't let you. Think of all the days you'll have to write your stupid old book after I'm gone. Let's go for a nice long walk."

But Richard, wanting to go, found pleasure in perversely refusing, and in the end they walked back across the lawn to the house, Betty declaring that if he tried to work she would stand outside his window and howl.

In the hall: "If you'll come into the drawing-room I'll play for you, Richard. I'll even try to sing. You know you think I have a perfectly delicious voice. I'll play 'When I was One-and-twenty,' Richard."

In the library: "I think it would be awfully nice if you'd find an interesting book and read to me, Richard. I'd be just as quiet and good!"

At the study door: "May I come in a moment, please? I—I want to have another look at it, Richard. When I am far away, I'd like to be able to—to picture you at your desk, you know." Betty's voice sank pathetically, but the violet eyes danced with mischief. Richard tried to laugh as he slowly closed the door against her importunities, but the laugh had a break in it.

"Go away, little girl," he said.

"Richard."

"Well?"

"Please be nice to me *to-day!*"

A small foot in a white buckskin shoe, and a slender ankle in a white silken stocking, intercepted the closing door.

"I shall be remarkably nice this afternoon, Betty. Please take your foot away.

"Shan't, Richard."

"Then it will get hurt," he said shortly.

"I'd rather have my foot hurt than my heart," replied Betty dolefully.

"Betty!"

"What?" she murmured from behind the narrow interstice.

"Please take your foot away."

"Now you're cross with me," she grieved. The foot disappeared slowly. The door closed, and the key turned in the lock.

"Richard."

"Well?" he asked, after a moment.

"I'm going out in the garden to eat worms!"

Frowning, Richard crossed to his desk. Four white roses that shaded at the base of the opening petals to a pale sulphur yellow nodded from a slender vase on the desk. They occasioned no surprise, for flowers of some sort he found there every morning. And every morning he conveyed them resolutely across to the mantel. But now, his hand closing on the slender stem of the vase, he hesitated. At last, compromising, he set the vase at a corner of the desk.

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Then, in the act of filling his pipe, he heard soft footsteps on the porch. He swung around. Betty was already pushing open the door. He darted across.

"Betty!" he warned.

The door was wide, and she was on the threshold. There was a wicked sparkle in her eyes, and a vivid disc of colour in each smooth cheek. Richard sprang to the middle of the doorway and held his arms across it, facing her.

"You're behaving like a child," he muttered impatiently.

"Richard, I want to come in just a minute, please. I want to ask you something."

"You can ask it where you are," he answered grimly.

"I can't, Richard; it—it's something very particular." Her eyes were dark and big and held a challenge. "Please be nice to me!"

"Betty, I've told you——" he began.

"I know, but just think, Richard, this is my last day here——"

"Betty, you shan't come in!"

She raised her hands and laid them on the lapels of his coat, twisting the cloth between her fingers. His own hands closed over them to drag them away. Their eyes clashed, hers wide, dark, and defiant, his smouldering with anger. His hands pulled at hers, crushing them roughly.

"You're hurting me," she whispered, her eyes still on his.

"Then go," he said hoarsely.

"No!"

There was an age-long silence. Into it, as though from another world, came the song of a thrush. Something in his eyes warned her then, and he heard her little startled gasp as she dropped her gaze and released her grasp on his coat. His hands fell away with hers, still clasping them tightly, and then——

How it happened he never knew, but his arms went around her, and he saw the wonder in her eyes as he bent his head and crushed his lips against her mouth.

Then he was standing away from her, dismayed, dizzy, bewildered.

"I told you—to go!" he muttered.

She stood where he left her, white as a ghost, her wide eyes filled with wonder. Then a swift flood of colour encrimsoned her face, and a queer little crooked smile played for an instant about her mouth. She turned away and with lowered head passed slowly across the porch, down the path and so around the house.

Standing there, he listened to her footsteps die away. For minutes after he remained without movement. At last he crossed to the desk, dropped into a chair, and took up his pen mechanically. An hour later he still sat there, the pen, dry and forgotten, still between his fingers, an

empty pipe in his mouth, and his gaze fixed unseeing on the white roses. At last he understood.

CHAPTER X

THEY did not meet again until dinner. Betty, said Aunt Letitia, had a headache. Perhaps, had his aunt been less wise, she might have believed Richard to be afflicted with a similar malady, for he dallied with his luncheon like a man in a dream, and spoke only when she addressed him. He disappeared in the afternoon, dragging a stick in one hand, and appeared again only when the shadows were lying long and deep across the lawn.

He timed himself so well that when he descended the stairs the dinner chimes were still echoing in the hall. If he expected embarrassment on Betty's part, or signs of resentment or displeasure, he was speedily undeceived. Nor was there aught about her to indicate suffering. She had arrayed herself in a gown of satin, a thing of clinging white folds that sparkled with silver, and a fillet of silver bound her hair. Why the fact that she looked lovely and delectable should have displeased Richard, he could not have explained, probably, but the fact was there. And he was further chagrined by her untroubled countenance and light-hearted ease.

"I suppose," he reflected bitterly, as he took his place at table, "it meant nothing to her; merely an act of brutality on my part, that she has decided to forgive—and forget!" But even as he told himself that, a memory of the look in her face as he had released her obtruded and shook his conclusion. Once in the middle of dinner he glanced across and found an echo of that same expression levelled upon him, but her eyes dropped swiftly before his, and he found his fork wandering erratically about his plate.

They had coffee in the drawing-room. Betty finished her sweet concoction quickly. For some minutes she moved restlessly about the room, finally seating herself at the piano. "Them as don't want to listen is requested to move out," she announced.

"I don't think anyone will leave, dear," said Aunt Letitia, smiling. "I shall miss your playing so very much when you've gone."

"Only my playing, Aunt Letitia?" asked Betty, searching among the notes.

"You much more, Betty," was the response. "I'm hoping, dear, that you'll come back to us."

"Would you really like me to?" asked Betty, playing softly.

"Very much, indeed."

"Both of you, Aunt Letitia?"

"Why, of course, my dear."

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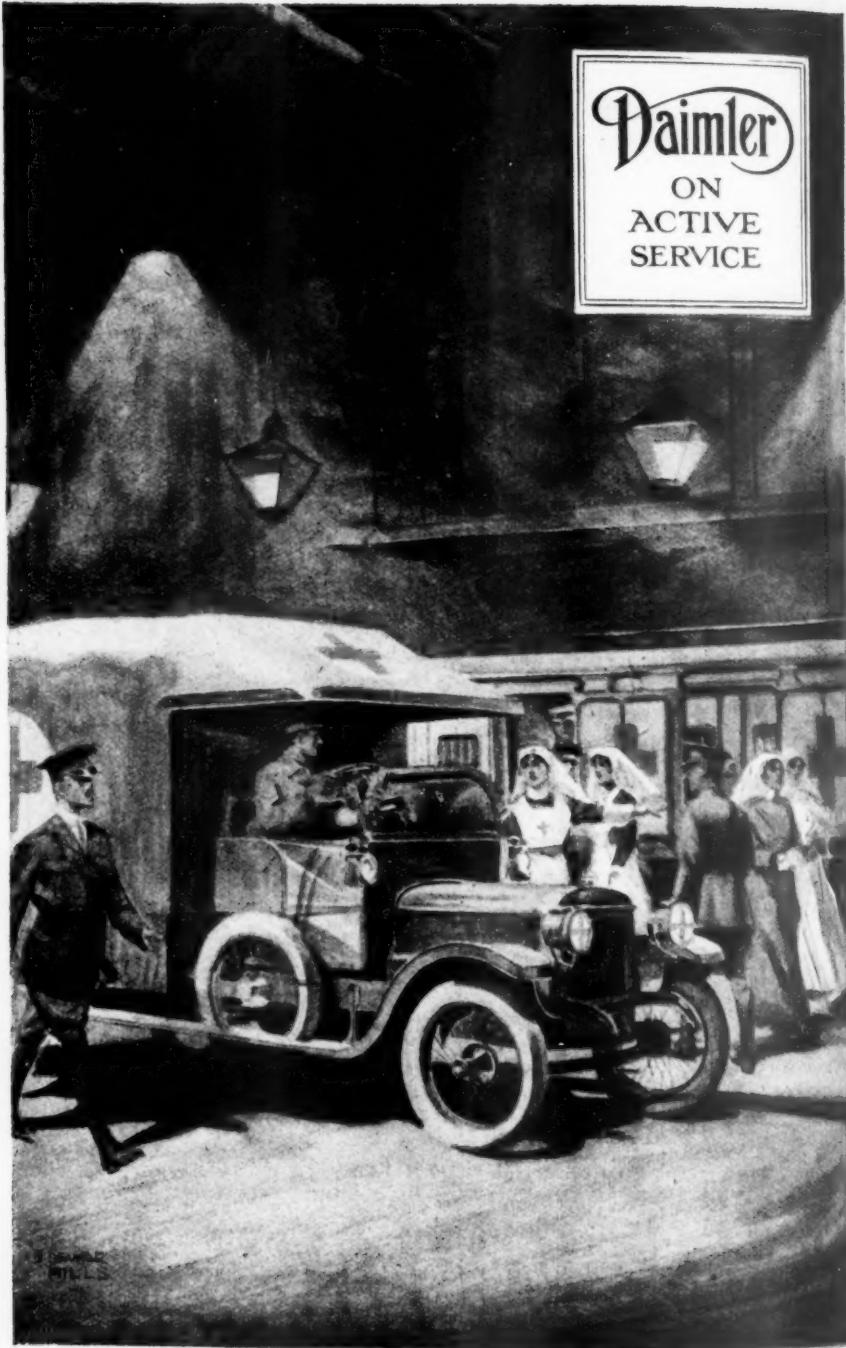
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BETTY UNINVITED

"I'm not hearing much from the other," said Betty, after a moment.

"The other heartily endorses the—er—invitation," said Richard, very politely. Without seeing it, he knew that the sheet of music on the rack had had a face made at it.

"I shall sing you something very sweet and sad, and you're both expected to weep," said Betty lightly. "All ready? Got your hanky handy, Aunt Letitia?" And Betty began to sing slowly and softly:

"Into my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows:
What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what farms, are those?

"That is the land of lost content;
I see it shining plain;
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again,
And cannot come again."

The notes died away, and Betty's hands rested in her lap. There was a long moment of silence in the softly-lighted room.

"It is very sweet," said Aunt Letitia, troubled. "But—"

"But sad? Very well, then. Perhaps you'll like this better. I don't know all the words, but that won't matter."

"Divvy, me mon, come home," says she.
"Ye ken the fair be ower.
The cow an' baizens be waitin' we,
An' hap 'tis like to shower."
"Molly, me lass," says I, 'me dear,
What tho' the fair be ower?
Me head be clear, I've a shillin' here,
And I'll ha' a wee mug moe!"

A second verse followed the first, and a third verse the second, Betty piping merrily to the rollicking tune. Richard, frowning, arose and went out on to the porch. Behind him the absurd song went on to its triumphant ending:

"Me legs be bent an' me coid's all spent,
Thanks be, I can gi' over!"

Steps crossed the room behind him. The porch was unlighted, and from the doorway she searched the shadows, the light behind her throwing her slender, rounded form into uncertain relief.

"Richard?" she said doubtfully.
"Yes?"

She went to him. "I didn't mean—I'm sorry I was nasty," she said gently. For a moment there was no reply.

"You were not," he said. "But—while apologies are in order, I wish to—to beg your pardon for—what happened this morning. It was a horrid thing to do. I don't know what possessed me. I don't know why I did it. I—I'm sorry."

"You don't know why you did it?" asked Betty in tones that sounded perplexed.

"Well, I was angry; I lost my temper; I—"

"But"—Betty's perplexity seemed to have deepened—"it seems such a funny thing to do, Richard, doesn't it? To—to kiss a person because you are angry with them."

"Possibly; I suppose so," he granted. "At all events, I've felt like a cur ever since."

"I don't think you ought to blame yourself—much," said she thoughtfully. "I suppose it was my fault, Richard. I made you—angry. And, anyhow, it isn't as bad as it would be if—if we weren't cousins."

"Cousins!" he said impatiently. "We're not cousins, and you know it!"

"Then, that explains it," mused Betty.

"Explains what?" he asked, after a moment's silence.

"Explains why it didn't seem—like—like being cousins," she replied reflectively. "Somehow, Richard, it didn't."

"It wasn't meant to!" he exclaimed, turning to her for the first time. "I don't feel like a cousin to you! I feel like—like—"

"A 'second'?" she asked helpfully.

He turned away again. There was a long silence.

"You haven't told me what you feel like," she reminded him finally.

"Like the deuce!" he replied, exasperated. "I beg your pardon," he added stiffly.

But Betty was laughing.

"Oh, Richard, you're funny," she gasped.

"I'm glad that I amuse you."

"Now, please don't be angry again! You know what—happens—when you're angry, Richard!"

"What occurred is evidently only a joke to you," he said, "and I see that I might as well have spared myself the trouble of an apology."

"A joke?" said Betty softly. She shook her head in the darkness. "No, it wasn't a joke, Richard. Would it make you any more—more contented if I were to be angry and not speak to you?"

"I'd deserve it," he muttered unhappily. "I—I forgot myself."

"I really—believe—you did!" exclaimed Betty incredulously. "And to think that I did it! That it was I who—who made you so angry that you forgot *yourself!* Why, you don't know how proud I feel, Richard!"

He turned abruptly and strode into the house. When Betty, repentant, overtook him, he was bidding Aunt Letitia good night. Then, seeing her there, he bowed stiffly.

"No, I won't be said good night to like that," she declared. "Aunt Letitia, don't let him go off to bed angry with me."

"I'm sure he won't," replied Aunt Letitia

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gently. But Richard, grim of mouth, had passed into the hall. He was on the landing at the turn of the broad flight when Betty called up to him.

"Richard, Aunt Letitia says you're not to go to bed angry with me."

Richard's steps ceased.

"I'm not angry with you, Betty," he answered. "Good night."

"We-ell, that's better, but it isn't very—very friendly, Richard. Could you say 'Good night, Betty dear'?"

"Good night, Betty dear," he responded listlessly.

She stamped her foot on the lower stair. "I won't be 'deared' in such a tone, Richard! And I think the least you might do is come back here and shake hands with me properly. You—you won't have me to say good night to to-morrow night, you know."

Slowly Richard retraced his steps, his set mouth and tired frown showing that he was about at the end of his endurance. He held out his hand.

"Good night, Cousin Betty," he said firmly. "I'm sorry you are leaving us."

"Good night, Richard," she answered gravely, as they clasped hands for an instant. "I'm glad you don't want me to go. And I'm sorry I've been horrid."

"Good night," he said again. She watched him go back up the stairs, a little pucker of perplexity above her small nose. Then, just as he reached the top of the flight, "Richard," she called softly.

"Yes, Betty?"

"You said you were sorry for—for something, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Very sorry?"

"Very sorry, Betty."

"And you want me to forgive you, Richard?"

"Yes."

"Then I shan't!" she whispered piercingly. "Do you hear? I shan't!"

"I'm sorry," came a tired voice from above. Footsteps sounded along the hall, and a door closed quietly. Betty stood there a moment at the foot of the stairway, twisting a ring slowly about her finger and frowning. Then she went slowly back to the drawing-room and seated herself on the piano-stool, facing Aunt Letitia. The latter looked up once from her work, smiled, and bent her head again.

"Has he gone up?" she asked.

"Yes."

"I hope," smiled Aunt Letitia, "you made up your quarrel."

"I suppose so," sighed Betty. "Only—I don't think it's very nice of him to be so sorry!" she added after a moment's pause.

CHAPTER XI

BETTY took her departure in the morning. Breakfast was a hurried meal, interrupted by suddenly remembered omissions and consequent scurries upstairs. At the last moment Betty had made the disconcerting discovery that it was a physical impossibility to put about fifty pounds' worth of attire into a hand-bag, and Curran had been sent to the attic for a trunk, and Sophie summoned to pack it.

Aunt Letitia sat on the back seat with Betty on the way to the station, while Richard drove. The train for once was prompt, and there was only time to take a ticket before it rumbled up to the platform. Then Betty and Aunt Letitia hugged and kissed, both a little tearful, and Richard hurried Betty into the compartment. Through the window she clung to his hand a moment.

"Good-bye, Richard. I've had such a good time. And I'm going to write to you, and you've got to answer it. Will you?"

"Of course, Betty. Good-bye."

The train moved, and with a last little squeeze Betty released his hand and blew a kiss to Aunt Letitia. Then her eyes met Richard's and held them while the train rolled out.

There was a letter two days later, to Aunt Letitia. She read it aloud at the luncheon table. Betty wrote that she had made her journey safely. Mr. Craigie had met her in London, taken her to luncheon, and put her on her train later. Burfield seemed a very jolly place, and the Bradfords were awfully nice to her, but she was homesick for "The Hermitage." She thanked them for being so kind to her and ended up with:

"P.S.—Ask Richard if he is still sorry."

"What does she mean by that?" asked Aunt Letitia.

"Just some of her nonsense," replied Richard.

A few days later there came a letter to Richard. There was not a great deal in it, even though it covered four pages, for Betty's writing was tall and angular, and she often made four words fill a line. She was having a splendid time, she said, and wished Richard could come and enjoy the sailing and bathing. She told of a dance the Bradfords had given in her honour. "And," she wrote, "because I have been horrid so often to you, and you weren't there, Richard, I put your name down for a dance, and wouldn't give it to anyone, but sat it out with Tom Craigie." Richard smiled glumly there. She hoped he would finish his work soon and come to Burfield for a long rest. And she concluded with:

"Please write to me immediately. With cousinly affection.—BETTY."



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BETTY UNINVITED

Richard tried to answer her letter lightly, but succeeded only in producing a very stiff and formal epistle. After he had posted it, he wished it back. There were no more letters to him, although Aunt Letitia received a short note occasionally.

Meanwhile, July came in with a spell of hot weather, and then gave way to a week of rain. Richard worked on doggedly, and when August was a week old wrote the last word on his manuscript. A day or two later he took it to London, spent a day there in consultation with his publishers, and then went into Surrey and stayed a fortnight with some distant relatives.

He had feared that with the completion of his work the dull ache and empty longing which had taken possession of him at Betty's departure would become more difficult to bear. But physical exhaustion proved an effective narcotic, and the ache, while still there, was considerably deadened during that fortnight. He returned to London at twilight one Sunday towards the last of the month, and walked from Waterloo to his club. The club dining-room was almost empty. Richard ordered dinner, and then, after five minutes of indecision, went to the telephone and rang up Tom Craigie. Mr. Craigie, he was informed, was out of town.

"When is he expected back?" Richard asked.

There was evidently a moment's conference at the other end of the line, and then: "I can't say exactly, sir. Probably about the middle of September. He's gone abroad, sir."

"Abroad! Are you certain?"

"Yes, sir. He sailed about two weeks ago. If you'll call up his office, I think you can get his address."

Richard returned to his lukewarm soup, wondering. He had firmly expected to hear, after the return of Betty's parents, of her engagement to Tom. He had even suspected a tacit engagement already. But Tom's sudden departure scarcely fitted with his theory. Unless—unless Betty, relenting, had elected to join her parents on the other side, and Tom had followed her over. But that seemed hardly plausible. He might, he told himself, call up the Bradfords' house at Burfield on the telephone and soon find out whether Betty had left, but, after all, it could concern him but little. Even if he had mistaken her feeling for Tom, and that seemed far from possible, the mere fact of Tom's retreat made his own case no better. And having spent two months trying to accustom himself, though not very successfully, to the prospect of getting along without Betty, it would not be wise to listen to her voice again, even so many miles away.

Business affairs kept him in town until afternoon of the next day, and he reached Amburst long after dark.

He had not announced the time of his return, and consequently Curran was not on hand to meet him. A cab from the livery stable conveyed him and his luggage to "The Hermitage" through a star-bright night that already held a hint of autumn. Richard felt a dread of home-coming, and apprehension lest a return to the scenes in which Betty had moved might bring it all back again at its worst. His thoughts were very full of her as the horse jogged along the country road, and there was a tight ache at his heart when the cab turned in at the gate and creaked over the gravel.

It was not until they had stopped and he had stepped to the ground, his golf-bag rattling against his legs, that the sound of music came to him through the open windows. It was not like Aunt Letitia to stay up so late when he was away from home. Besides, the air! He stood still and listened, his heart suddenly beating with sledge-hammer blows.

"Which way shall I take the trunk?" asked the driver.

"Keep still!" whispered Richard sharply. The driver, balancing the steamer trunk on his shoulder, froze to amazed attention. From the house softly floated out the notes of the piano and a girl's voice singing :

"When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
Give crowns and pounds and guineas
But not your heart away.
Give pearls away and rubies
But keep your fancy free.
But I was one-and-twenty—
No use to talk to me."

"What's wrong, sir?" whispered the driver hoarsely.

Richard made no answer. The voice took up the song again, and he stood silent through the second verse.

The music died away softly. Richard came to his senses with a start.

"Take the trunk round to the back," he said in a queer voice. Then he walked along the path, swung open the door, and entered the hall.

He had not tried to be quiet. His thoughts were in too great a tumult to formulate any plan. He only wanted to see with his eyes and be certain. But he reached the hall without the occupants of the drawing-room suspecting his presence. From where he paused he could see them both: Aunt Letitia by the small table with the low light, bending over her embroidery; Betty on the stool before the piano, her head held a little forward, as though listening, her fingers motionless at the tips of the keys. He stood there for a moment, his heart beating so loudly that it seemed they must hear it beyond the doorway. Then Betty's head turned slowly in his direction, and he saw her hands fly from the keys to her breast as

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their eyes met. She made no sound, nor did Richard consciously move, but Aunt Letitia seemed to sense something happening, and glanced at Betty. Then she was on her feet, coming to meet him.

"Why, Richard, we had no idea you were coming to-night. We were wishing at dinner that you might come, dear, but your letter spoke of Tuesday. Have you had anything to eat?"

"Yes, thanks." He kissed her, and his gaze went past to the drawing-room. Betty was on her feet, smiling. She met him at the doorway with two small hands outstretched to his.

"Here's your bad penny, Richard," she said, "come home to roost. No, no, it's chickens I'm thinking of. Anyhow, here I am again. Please say quickly that you're glad to see me."

"I am," he answered. He tried to match the lightness of her tone, but failed dizzily. "Awfully glad, Betty!" Then he found that he was still holding her hands, and released them, and followed her into the drawing-room as though in a dream. He found himself seated in a chair, observing Betty, bewildered.

"How—how long have you been here?" he asked.

"Since Saturday. I was going to-day, but Aunt Letitia wanted me to wait and see you." She paused, and laughed at herself. "That's a bit of a fib, Richard. Of course, she wanted me to stay, but not as much as I wanted to. You see, it did seem a shame to come all this way and not even have a glimpse of you, didn't it?"

"But—er—why—"

"Did I come? Do you think that's a polite question, Mr. Dick? Well, things happened all at once. The Bradfords have gone to stay with some friends, and Dad and Mum are coming home on Wednesday. So, as I was homeless, I came here. I didn't even wire; I just came—like I did the other time, you know. But I didn't find any fierce ogre of a man to ask what I meant by trespassing in his garden."

"And the ogre," answered Richard unsteadily, "is so glad to see you that—he can't quite believe his senses."

Her eyes dropped away from his and a little pause followed. Betty then told of the summer's happenings. She mentioned Tom's name again and again, with no trace of hesitation or self-consciousness.

"Mr. Craigie has gone abroad, Richard," said Aunt Letitia.

"Yes, I tried to find him, and they told me that. I was—er—surprised."

"He went rather unexpectedly, I think," said Betty, elaborately careless. "Something about business, he said."

Presently they went into the dining-room, where Maggie had spread cold meats and a salad, and where Richard, protesting

that he was not hungry, ate of everything in a sort of daze, and made no effort to keep his eyes from Betty, who was in high spirits. Aunt Letitia was yawning frankly when they left the table. Betty said good night at the foot of the stairs. Richard watched her until the turn of the flight hid her from view; then, a sudden spirit of daring possessing him, he called up to her.

"Yes?" asked Betty from the hall above.

"I've changed my mind," he said.

"About what, pray?"

"About—about being sorry. I'm not, Betty. I'm glad."

There was no sound from above for a moment. Then a subdued ripple of laughter floated down to him. That was all—that and the soft closing of a door.

CHAPTER XII

I WISH you were not going away again so soon," he rebelled.

They were back on the marble seat at the far end of the garden the next morning. A few monthly roses still showed blooms, but most of them had had their day. Still, there were plenty of blossoms—dahlias, phlox, tritomas, scarlet sage, hydrangeas, and a score of other late-summer flowers. And the bees still buzzed and boomed above the beds, and the fragrance had not lessened, only changed. The fauns smirked on their white columns, and a little breeze swayed the tall shrubs behind them.

"I'd like to stay," she replied, "but of course, I should be at Liverpool to meet Dad to-morrow. As it is, my dear sir, I'm waiting until the last train to-night for the sake of your society."

"Which I appreciate," he answered rather ceremoniously.

"With wild enthusiasm," she laughed. "Richard, do you remember that first day?" she asked, after a pause.

His face cleared, and he smiled reminiscently.

"I'm not likely to forget it," he replied. "I'm afraid your welcome was not—ever very cordial, Betty."

"And do you remember how you wanted to send me away to placate Mrs. Grundy, Richard?"

"I still maintain that I was right," he answered, smiling.

"Oh, I acknowledge that. Only—well, you weren't flattering. If you had said, 'I don't like you to go, but I see no other way,' I'd have trotted off like a trained puppy. But you didn't; you looked worried and bored and—"

"Please don't go on," he begged. "I acknowledge it all."

"You'd better. But I forgave you long

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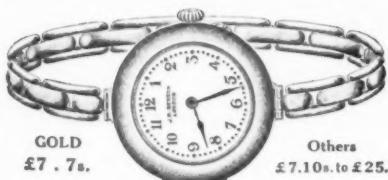
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BETTY UNINVITED

ago, so that's all right, isn't it? There's one thing, though, I have a good mind not to forgive you for, Richard, and that is that nasty, horrid, miserable letter."

"Was it so bad?" he asked guiltily.

"It was frightful! Why did you write like that?"

"I—perhaps I couldn't help myself, Betty. It was horrid, and I realised it afterwards. And I didn't blame you for not replying to it."

"I did, though, twice. But I didn't send them. The first was too horrid, and the other was too nice—nicer than you deserved. But never mind all that now. Here I am, and there you are, and we're back in this dear, wonderful garden again, and—Richard, did he ever tell you?" She nodded at one of the fauns.

"No, he never did, Betty."

"Of course he didn't. He's a perfect gentleman of a faun. He promised faithfully that he wouldn't."

"Well, it wasn't so much that, I fancy," said Richard carelessly. "You see, I never asked him. It seemed underhand, Betty. I preferred to rely on you to tell me. I knew you would—some time."

"Really?" she laughed. "Do you want to know? We'll, perhaps some day I'll tell you."

"Some day? But you're going in a few hours. There'll never be a better time, Betty."

She was silent for a moment, studying a pair of slender brown shoes. "There's one thing, though, I meant to tell you when I came, Richard," she said at last.

"And what is that?" he asked.

She was silent for another little space. Then: "It—it is something that may surprise you."

"I like surprises—if they're pleasant."

She shot a queer little look of amusement at him, turned her gaze back to her feet, and said doubtfully, "Well, I don't know whether you'll call this pleasant or not, Richard. But—but I'm going to be married."

After a long, long time he said quietly, "I suppose I ought to be very glad, Betty, for your sake."

She nodded without looking towards him. There seemed a deeper flush in her smooth cheeks.

"I suppose I know the fortunate man," he went on presently, trying to speak steadily.

She nodded again.

"It's Tom, of course?"

"No."

"Oh!" he said in surprise. "But I thought—"

"I—I don't believe I can quite tell you—just now—who he is," said Betty hurriedly. "I—I thought I could, but—but I guess I can't."

"As you like," he responded gravely. He sat silent for a while, gazing rather miserably across the sunlit garden, resentfully aware that the old ache was back, much worse than before. "Shall we go in now?" he asked, rousing himself presently.

"But don't you want to know about him?" she faltered in dismay.

"Whenever you care to tell me," he replied.

"Well, maybe—" She paused and looked at him anxiously. "Oh, can't you guess, Richard?" she exclaimed breathlessly.

"I? No." He shook his head. "If it isn't Tom—"

"Is—is Tom the only man you know who—who would care to marry me?" she asked, eying her feet again.

"Yes, I think so," he responded slowly, trying to recall any other of her men friends.

"Oh!" She sounded hurt. "Then—then perhaps I'm not going to be married, after all, Richard."

"I'm afraid I don't—don't understand you," he said, puzzled, wondering if his misery was making him dense. "Is it someone I know?"

"Oh, yes, you know him," answered Betty, with a tiny laugh. "He—he's been here."

"Been here! And it's not Tom, you say? When was he here?"

She swung her feet exasperatedly. "I shan't tell you any more," she cried. "I—I've told you too much already. Come, please, I'm going in."

"I think you've told me too little, Betty," he said in a low voice, "or else—" He stopped. She turned her head and shot a glance at him. There was a strange look in his face—a look of mingled wonder and incredulity. Betty turned her eyes swiftly away again, while the colour crept into her face as it had that day in the study, flooding over her neck and cheeks and brow. Neither spoke, and the boom of the bees and the chirping of birds sounded, as then, as from another world.

"I—I'm afraid to say what I'm going to, Betty," Richard announced, after an age of silence. His voice was low and unsteady. "I'm simply frightened to death. Because if I am wrong, I'm so terribly wrong that you'll want to laugh at me, and I shan't blame you. But you asked if—if there was no one else who—who cared for you, Betty; who wanted to marry you. You did, didn't you?"

Betty nodded, her face turned away from him, her small hands gripping the edge of the seat so that the knuckles showed almost as white as marble.

"And you said he had been here." Richard stopped, trying for courage to go on. "There's only one other I know of,

THE QUIVER

Betty, and he—" His voice trailed away. "It's absurd," he muttered.

After a moment, without movement: "Lots—of things—are absurd," murmured Betty.

"Then—this man you are going to marry, Betty," asked Richard desperately, "does he know it yet?"

It was an absurd question on the face of it—a question which Betty might well have resented. But she didn't. She only laughed a ghost of a little laugh, a half-frightened, rather sobby little laugh, as she answered in what was scarcely more than a whisper:

"Not yet, but—he's—beginning—to find it out!"

"Betty!" His voice was hoarse and stern. "Who is he?"

For an instant she made neither movement nor answer. Then she swung toward him with crimson face.

"Oh, you stupid!" she cried indignantly. "It's you, you, *you!* And you had to make me tell you, and I'll never be able to look at you again, and you're so horribly stupid that I won't now, and—"

But the rest was smothered against his shoulder, for, once sure of his ground, Richard was no laggard.



Some minutes later Betty raised her head a little.

"You—you haven't said yet whether you want to, Richard!" she whispered.

His answer, barely audible, seemed nevertheless satisfactory, for the head went down again. But a moment later, as though new doubts had assailed her:

"If you don't—really, you know, Richard—it isn't too late," she said, "because no one knows about—about it, except just we three."

"We three?" he asked, bewildered.

The brown head nodded as well as its confined position would allow. "Yes, you—and I—and the faun," whispered Betty.

"So that was the secret?" he marvelled.

"Yes. You see, Richard, I just had to tell someone. And he seemed—seemed discreet!"

Richard laughed very happily. Then he sighed.

"What?" asked Betty.

"I don't understand it a bit," he replied helplessly. "I thought it was Tom, and I've been so miserable, dear!"

"Tom! Why, Tom's a perfect dear," replied Betty slowly, "but—but I never meant to marry him! He—he thought I did,

though. But he was quite nice and reasonable about it. What do you suppose he said, Richard? He said, 'Well, you'll be sort of in the family, Betty, and that's something!' "

"What did he mean, dear?"

"Why, I suppose he meant—I suppose he kind of guessed—about you, sir!"

"Goodness me! And I never suspected it!"

"You! I should say not! How could you, with your beautifully classic nose against your old manuscript all the time? Don't you see that I simply *had* to tell you finally? You'd never have found it out by yourself, and I don't suppose you'd ever have asked. Would you, Richard?"

"I think so—after a while," he responded, laughing.

"After a while! I'd been an old maid by that time, silly! It's time I was married too. Why, I'm almost twenty-one, Richard!"

"Then we'd better hurry," he exclaimed. "Before the grey hairs come, sweetheart. Don't you think so?"

She sat up and squirmed away from him to a distance of a whole yard. "I think," she said gravely, "I—I'd feel more comfortable, Richard, if you asked me."

"Betty," he said softly, "I love you, dear." The hand in his fluttered. "Will you marry me, Betty?"

Betty gravely regarded her shoes for a moment. Then :

"We-ell," she replied doubtfully, "it—it is very sudden, and I'm awfully surprised, but—" Then she turned, smiled adorably, and nodded her head emphatically. And Richard, exterminating the distance between them, took her into his arms again.

Behind them in the tall hedge a bird burst into golden melody. A breeze crept across the garden, and the flower heads nodded at the news he whispered, as much as to say, "Run along with you! We knew it months ago!" A big, purple-black bumble-bee circled around them inquiringly, and then went booming off again. "At last!" he seemed to say. "Of all silly folks—"

"Betty?" Richard said presently.

"Yes?" asked Betty with a contented little sigh.

"When you told the faun, sweetheart, did you know then? Was it as long ago as that, Betty?"

"Longer," replied Betty, with a soft gurgle of laughter. "Much longer! Why, you poor, innocent old duck of a Richard, you were a goner the minute I set eyes on you!"

THE END.

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COMPETITION FOR WOUNDED SOLDIERS

Ten Pounds for the Best Motto designed by a Wounded Soldier

By THE EDITOR

AS announced last month, I am inviting wounded soldiers to devote the spare time that hangs heavy on their hands to some useful and beautiful work.

Encouragement for Good Work

Many of our wounded men have taken up fancy work, knitting and similar "feminine" occupations, and it is surprising what splendid work many of them are turning out. I am convinced that there are thousands of our wounded who would be very grateful for some light, interesting work, and in that belief I have set a Competition open only to Wounded and Invalided Soldiers and Sailors.

I am relying on the services of my ordinary readers for bringing this Competition to the notice of the men who are likely to be interested in it. A little help in this way will be worth a deal of pity.

Mottoes to Cheer

The Competition is for Mottoes of a character suitable for hanging up in a hospital or institution for the wounded. The choosing of the Motto is left to the competitor, and he has the widest latitude in the choice of his material and method of execution. Of course, beauty of design and execution will be a main factor in deciding the Competition; but the adjudicators will also bear in mind the suitability of the Motto itself.

It will be seen that there is ample room for variety, ingenuity, and artistic effect. Any material may be used, providing the total cost does not exceed two shillings.

The Rules

The Rules are as follow:

1. The Competition is only open to Wounded or Invalided Soldiers and Sailors.

2. The Motto may be upon any material—paper, board, linen, canvas, etc.—and drawn, painted, or worked by any process—water-colour or oils, cotton or silk, or any other method. But the cost of the materials used must in no case exceed Two Shillings, and the finished article must not be more than 3 ft. in its longest dimension.
3. Each Motto must be accompanied by the Special Coupon (which will appear in an early issue), with the name, address, and rank of the competitor.
4. The entries must be addressed to the Editor, *THE QUIVER*, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C. 4, marked "Competition," and sent carriage paid. They must be received by the Editor not later than April 6th, 1918.
5. The decision of the Editor is final.

The Prizes

The First Prize will be Ten Pounds, the Second Five Pounds. Other prizes, consisting of handsome volumes, will be awarded in accordance with the number and merit of the entries received.

I want thousands of Mottoes sent in for this Competition. Here is splendid work for our wounded during the winter evenings, and I hope that the most will be made of the opportunity.

The Entries

If stamped addressed wrappers are enclosed with the entries, every endeavour will be made to return these to the competitors. If, however, stamped covers are not sent, it will be taken for granted that the competitors wish the Editor to dispose of them where they will be put to the most useful purpose. The entries winning the first and second prizes will not be returned.

Start now, for good work takes time. Do not send your entry in until the coupon is published, but go ahead with it as soon as you can.

The Home Department

THE CONTENTS OF THE CHRISTMAS PARCEL

By BLANCHE ST. CLAIR

THE planning, packing, and dispatching of a gift parcel is always one of the most delightful of occupations, for there is no greater pleasure than that of making or selecting a present which we hope will prove acceptable to those dear to us. The contents of the parcels destined to convey Christmas greetings call for even more than ordinary planning and forethought, and consequently cause even a warmer glow in the heart of the sender.

For our Brave Defenders

And if so much planning and arranging were spent when the world was imbued with the blessed spirit of peace, and loving hearts were not racked with the horrors and fears of war and the grinding uncertainty and strain of carrying on at home, how infinitely greater the care and affection that we want our Christmas parcels to convey to those who are defending us from the terrors unthinkable! Wives, mothers, brothers, and sisters are ready to deny themselves everything connected with the Yuletide festival in order to bring one hour's comfort and pleasure to the fighting men, and from present reports it would seem that many, many thousands of soldiers and sailors will have to spend yet another Christmas far from home and family circles.

Notwithstanding the experience that most

of us have had after three and a half years of war in sending parcels abroad, one hears on all sides of the omissions and mistakes that continue to be made.

Consult the Wishes of the Recipient

For instance, it would seem to be the most natural thing in the world when planning the contents of a parcel, particularly a Christmas parcel, to consult the personal likes and dislikes of the recipient; yet it is astonishing how many parcels are dispatched containing articles not only not desired, but in some cases positively disliked by the persons to whom they are sent. Mothers, of course, do not often make such mistakes, therefore if you think of sending a greeting to someone with whose tastes you are not intimately acquainted, seek information from this reliable source before dispatching the little gift. It is also expedient, when several members of one family are sending presents, to compare notes so that the contents of the parcels do not coincide, and Tommy or Jack receive five or six editions of the same plum cake or special brand of toffee. Perhaps I may add here that several smaller parcels are, from every point of view, better than one very large one, so plan your postings so that the packages arrive at intervals of, say, twenty-four or forty-eight hours apart. By this means the

A CHILD DOESN'T LAUGH AND PLAY IF CONSTIPATED

If Cross, Feverish, Constipated, Bilious, and the Stomach Out of Order, give "California Syrup of Figs."

A laxative to-day saves a bilious child tomorrow. Children simply will not take the time from play to empty their bowels, which become clogged up with waste; then the liver grows sluggish, and the stomach is disordered.

Look at the tongue, mother! If coated or your child is listless, cross, feverish, with tainted breath, restless, doesn't eat heartily, or has a cold, sore throat, or any other children's ailment, give a teaspoonful of "California Syrup of Figs," then don't worry, because it is a perfectly harmless dose, and in a few hours all this constipation poison, sour bile and fermenting waste matter will gently move out of the bowels, and you will have a healthy, playful child again. A thorough "inside cleansing" is oftentimes all that is necessary. It should be the first treatment given in any sickness.

Ask your chemist for a bottle of "California Syrup of Figs," which has full directions for babies, children of all ages, and for grown-ups plainly printed on the bottle. Look carefully and see that it is made by the "California Fig Syrup Company." All leading chemists sell "California Syrup of Figs" at 1/3 and 2/- per bottle. Refuse substitutes.

MOTHERS, DO THIS

When the children cough, rub St. Jacobs Oil on throats and chests.

No telling how soon the symptoms may develop, if neglected, into croup or pneumonia. You will never regret having that bottle of old, honest St. Jacobs Oil handy. The moment you use it, it quickly loosens up coughs and colds in throat or chest—instant relief from pain, soreness or stiffness follows.

As first-aid and a certain remedy for Chest Colds, Sore Throat, Bruises, Backache, etc., there's nothing like St. Jacobs Oil. Thousands of mothers know this.

It is the remedy for grown-ups too. Rub the soothing, penetrating Oil wherever the pain is, and relief comes like magic. Get a small bottle from your chemist to-day.

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"Danderine" makes hair thick, glossy and wavy.

Removes all dandruff, stops itching scalp and falling hair.



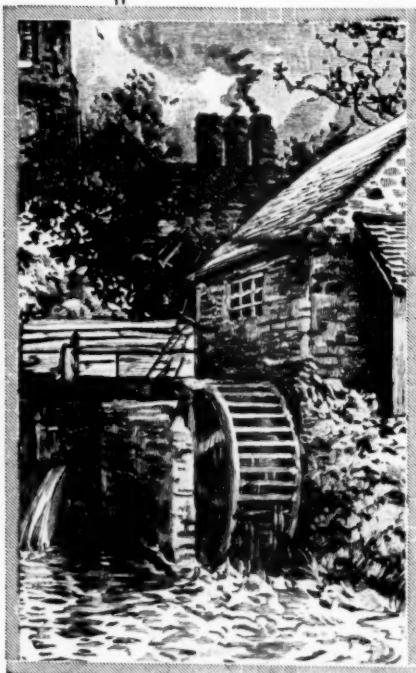
To be possessed of a head of heavy, beautiful hair; soft, lustrous, fluffy, wavy and free from dandruff, is merely a matter of using a little Danderine.

It is easy and inexpensive to have nice, soft hair and lots of it. Just get a shilling bottle of Knowlton's Danderine now—apply a little as directed, and within ten minutes there will be an appearance of abundance, freshness, fluffiness, and an incomparable gloss and lustre, and try as you will you cannot find a trace of dandruff or falling hair; but your real surprise will be after about two weeks' use, when you will see new hair—fine and downy at first—yes—but really new hair—sprouting out all over your scalp. Danderine is, we believe, the only sure hair grower, destroyer of dandruff, and cure for itchy scalp, and it never fails to stop falling hair at once. All chemists sell and recommend Danderine. 1/12 and 2/3 a bottle.

If you want to prove how pretty and soft your hair really is, moisten a cloth with a little Danderine and carefully draw it through your hair—taking one small strand at a time. Your hair will be soft, glossy, and beautiful in just a few moments—a delightful surprise awaits everyone who tries this.

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STONE
GROUND

Marshall's Wheatmeal

THE CONTENTS OF THE CHRISTMAS PARCEL

Christmas surprises are extended over several days, and the recipient is able to dispose of the contents of one box before another arrives.

As I have already mentioned, the sending of just the right and most suitable articles is very important; but if any of my readers are in doubt as to what to put into the parcels, the following list culled from regular parcel senders may be of some help. Some of the suggestions are a little unusual, but all have been proved acceptable, if one can judge from the grateful letters of the recipients.

Gifts which are Acceptable

Fruit cakes are always absolutely safe, and the more fruit they contain the better they are liked. Sweet biscuits, cheese-cakes, mince-pies, cheese straws, chip potatoes, potted meats (home-made), and fresh fruits are all general favourites. Dates, prunes, muscated raisins, and cooked chestnuts, as well as stuffed dates, peppermint creams, and toffee, are always received with "Send some more, please."

No doubt packing problems will be imagined by inexperienced parcel senders, but if the directions (given hereafter) are followed out the things will arrive in first-class condition. I am supposing that all these gifts are to be prepared at home (with the exception, of course, of the fruits). It is quite easy to make a further selection of tinned foods from the long list of tinned and tubed delicacies specially put up for export, but to my mind the Christmas parcel should be different from, and superior to, the ordinary parcels, and convey, as far as the circumstances permit, a remembrance of a home-spent Christmas, as it was before the war.

It will no doubt be noticed that the Christmas pudding has been omitted from the list. Here again rumour has it that our soldiers and sailors will be well provided with this seasonable delicacy, and as even a small pudding is a weighty item, I expect that very few will be sent from private sources. In any case, the recipe for the plum-pudding is more or less a matter of tradition, and it is not necessary to give one here.

The Christmas Cake

The Christmas cake must, of course,

adapt itself to circumstances, for several of the customary ingredients are difficult to obtain. Sugar icing is out of the question, but I believe that almond icing is still permissible. Almonds, however, are very expensive. Blanched walnuts or peeled Brazils coarsely chopped are excellent in a fruit cake, adding to the richness and flavour just as well as the almonds do. A friend of mine has experimented with these nuts for icing, and, prepared in the same way as almonds, they make a very good substitute for almond paste. Raisins or dates are the cheapest form of fruits; the latter possess such highly sweetening properties that but little sugar is required when they are used. When raisins only are used the flavour of the cake is greatly improved by adding a little spice to the dry ingredients.

Ginger Nuts

These are delicious, and "go down" with the hot tea which is served out to our boys with such methodical regularity.

Beat 4 oz. butter to a cream, add by degrees 8 oz. fine sieved flour and 4 oz. fine sugar, with as much powdered ginger as is liked. Beat the yolks of three eggs to a froth and stir to the other ingredients. Drop little pieces of the mixture on to a buttered paper, and bake in a warm oven for about fifteen minutes.

Coco-nut Cones

Whisk 3 eggs very thoroughly; sift in, by degrees, 9 oz. crushed loaf sugar and 6 oz. freshly grated coco-nut. Divide into pieces about the size of an egg, and shape into cones. Place on a tin, cover with paper, and bake in a gentle oven for fifteen minutes.

Oatmeal Biscuits

Mix together 4 oz. flour, 2 oz. oatmeal (coarse or fine as liked), and 1 oz. sugar. Warm 2 oz. butter and pour over these ingredients, then add a beaten egg and, if necessary, a little milk. The paste must be very stiff. Roll out to the thickness of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, cut with a tumbler or pastry cutter, place carefully on a greased tin, and bake for about ten minutes.

When making flat biscuits see that the tumbler or cutter is just a shade smaller than the circular tin in which the biscuits are to be packed. They can then be slipped

THE QUIVER

into the tin easily, and will travel without being cracked or broken. The coco-nut cones travel splendidly if packed in square or oblong tin boxes, the cones being placed in layers alternately points up and down. This applies to any "drop" cakes.

Cheese-cakes and Mince-pies

Cheese-cakes and mince-pies have reached their destinations in perfect condition when made of not too short pastry. They should be packed in circular tins (those originally used for a pound of coffee or Bath Olivers are best) with circles of grease-proof paper between them. The cheese-cake mixture should be firm and cooked in the pastry shapes, and the cheese-cakes placed two and two together, the mixture sides towards the centre.

By the way, a tin of cheese-cake mixture is a great joy "over there," where the boys get so tired of the more ordinary jam and marmalade.

Cheese Straws

Cheese straws are much appreciated, for even if they cannot be served hot (and our men are extremely resourceful in managing these little things) they are nearly as good cold. They are also heat producers and good stomachics.

Rub 3 oz. butter into 4 oz. sieved flour. Add 4 oz. finely grated cheese (not too fresh), a pinch of salt, and cayenne to taste. Bind with the beaten yolk of an egg. The ingredients must be carefully and thoroughly mixed, and the paste firm. Put on to a floured board and roll out to about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in thickness. Cut into narrow strips the length of the tin in which they are to be packed, and place on a greased baking sheet. Cook in a warm oven. The straws take but a few minutes to cook, and must not be allowed to colour from the heat. Let them get quite cold before they are handled, and packed in a paper-lined tin. Commence packing from the outer side of the tin, working towards the centre. Cover with paper, and see that the lid fits closely.

The sending of chipped and straw potatoes was rather an experiment, but it proved very successful. Our soldiers and sailors live so much on stew and soft food that anything crisp is a great treat. Some little care is necessary in cooking the potatoes. Select small tubers about the size of

an egg, and having washed and pared them, cut them into thin circular slices. Let the slices fall on to a dry cloth, and, when all are sliced, gently pat them to draw as much moisture as possible out of the potatoes. Set the frying-pan on the fire and fill it three parts full of fat. As soon as the blue flame rises drop a handful of the slices in and let them remain till delicately browned. If too many are put into the fat at once the slices will become sodden before they are crisped, and the effect is not good. Lift the slices out with a fish-slice, draining thoroughly, and place them on a hot dish covered with crumpled white paper. Stand in a cool oven (door open) till quite dry. The chips must be quite cold before they are packed in air-tight, paper-lined tins. If liked, they may be slightly sprinkled with pepper.

Potato Straws

Potato straws are cooked in the same way. The slices are cut lengthwise before they are cut into narrow strips or straws.

Chestnuts can be either boiled or roasted. They only need a few minutes' warming in any kind of receptacle, over any kind of a fire, to be as good as the appetising fare of the Italian chestnut vendor.

Home-made Potted Meat

Home-made potted meat is always acceptable. Here is a particularly good resemblance of *pâté de foie gras*.

Put 4 chicken livers and 2 hearts into a small stewpan with 1 bay leaf, 2 or 3 cloves, a little chopped parsley, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful salt, and pepper to taste. Add sufficient stock to cover. Simmer till quite tender. Lift the cooked livers and hearts out of the pan and pound in a mortar.

Put 2 tablespoonfuls margarine in a stewpan, and when melted add 1 tablespoonful finely chopped onion. Cook for ten minutes till the onion is soft, but not coloured; then add to the pounded livers. Season with salt, pepper, cayenne, and mace or nutmeg. Press into tins or moulds and cover with melted fat.

Potted cheese is a great improvement on sliced cheese. It is easily made by grating the cheese and pounding it with a little butter and mustard. It is then delicious spread on bread or biscuit.

A Winter Joy—

Bird's Custard

HOT with Pudding or Pie!

Not only Plum Puddings and Mince Pies, but the every-day Bread Pudding, Marmalade, or Apple Pudding, etc., are nicer and doubly nutritious with Bird's Custard HOT.

These good old English Puddings do the children good. They generate warmth and energy, cost less than meat, and are equally nutritious. A spoonful of creamy Bird's Custard to each slice gives the needful zest and adds honest nutriment.

Bird's Custard makes even a plain pudding a delightful treat.

Boiled puddings need no sugar when served with Bird's Custard.

Sold in pkts, boxes and large tins.

C25ab



Try also BIRD'S Custard
with Stewed Prunes.—
Healthful!—Delicious!

Sphere Suspenders

It is only necessary to ask your draper to show you a sample pair to see at a glance how infinitely superior is Sphere Supreme to all other suspenders.

TAKE note of its large button which grips the hose securely, but will not tear, no matter how delicate the fabric.

There are no others "just as good."

If any difficulty, write for samples, enclosing P.O. (prices 1/- to 3/-, postage 1/- extra), to

SPHERE SUSPENDER CO.
LEICESTER

THE SUCCESS IS IN THE BUTTON

THE LION LEADS IN CURING

It is Nature's Remedy.



BURGESS' LION OINTMENT

Cures without painful operations, lancing or cutting, in all cases of Ulcers, Abscesses, Whitlows, Boils, Fatty or Cystic Tumours, Piles, Fistula, Polypus, Poisoned Wounds, and all forms of Skin Disease. Its penetrative power makes it the best application for curing all Chest and Bronchial Troubles.

SEND TWO 1d. STAMPS FOR SAMPLE.

Sold by Chemists, gd., 1/3, etc. ADVICE GRATIS from E. BURGESS, 59 Gray's Inn Rd., London, W.C.1.

FOR
**Christmas Puddings
Cakes & Pastry,
ORDER**

BORWICK'S BAKING POWDER

from your Grocer and
USE NO SUBSTITUTE.



FREE TO MOTHERS.

To induce every Mother to try Neave's Food for her own Baby, we will send a sample tin free, if 1d. stamps are enclosed for postage. We will also send free a useful Booklet, "Hints About Baby." Every Mother ought to have this Booklet, and if a sample is not required the Booklet alone will be sent free and post free on receipt of a post card mentioning "Quiver."

**JOSIAH R. NEAVE & CO.,
FORDINGBRIDGE.**

Be sure to mention "Quiver."

MY POCKET COMPANION for 1918

The Pocket Diary and Text Book which is appreciated by all. It contains, in addition to the Diary and Daily Texts, 24 pages of help and encouragement. Here are three little things you should do with it:-

Always carry about with you "My Pocket Companion." Use the morning text, and pass on to others its helpful counsels.

Write down the name of every soldier and sailor you know. Then send to each a copy of "My Pocket Companion." Many of our brothers in the trenches and in the camps tell us how it helps them every day.

Send it as well to all your personal friends instead of Christmas cards. If you like, we can print your name and a personal greeting on the copies you send out for 1s. 3d. extra. Many people did this last year, and all their friends were pleased.

The Cost of Copies:-

These are the prices of "My Pocket Companion": Specimen copy, 2½d.; 6 for 1s.; 12 for 1s. 9d.; 20 for 3s. 9d.; 50 for 5s. 6d.; 100 for 10s. 6d.; 200 for 1s. 100 for 2s 15d. ALL WITH FREE POSTAGE.

We also do a splendid leather-bound edition, and will send you a single copy for 6d.

Order early from

J. A. KENSIT, 3 & 4 St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C.4

HOPE

How it came to a Sufferer from Epilepsy.

I HAD shut the door against hope. There was apparently no room for it in my life. For epilepsy had me firmly and as it seemed, hopelessly in its grip. My people were all orthodox, some of the family are themselves well-known doctors, keen on upholding the dignity of the profession.

Yet there was, after all, a doctor who opened the door of hope to me by giving me Gilbert Dale's wonderful little book, "Epilepsy: its Causes, Symptoms and Treatment." He made me read it carefully and profit by it if I could, and if I dared.

One doesn't suffer as I suffered and then be cured as I have been cured without wanting to let others know about it.

Epileptic sufferers can be counted by hundreds of thousands, even in this country, and I want to tell them about the Dale Treatment. I want to give them just the chance to try it that my doctor friend gave me.

The Dale Treatment applies especially, and almost exclusively, to cases of epilepsy which have been turned down as hopeless by the ordinary medical practitioner.

Mr. Gilbert Dale is no quack. He makes no pretension of having discovered a miraculous cure-all for this, that and the other disease. What he desires is to have the chance of deciding whether or not the case of epilepsy spoken of as incurable by your own doctor is or is not curable from his—Dale's—point of view.

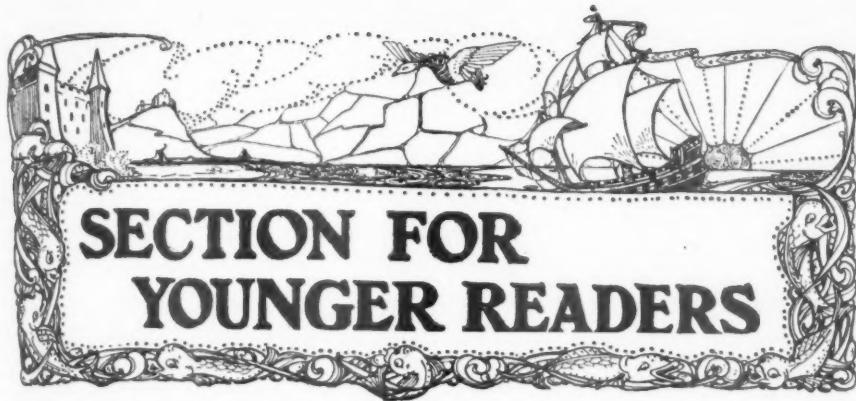
Give him this chance of helping you. He has thousands of grateful patients permanently cured of epilepsy, ready to tell of the wonderful knowledge and skill which are his to command when dealing with this special disease. He uses neither Bromide nor Potassium nor any poison in his medicines. Indeed, he does not believe in drugging, and the preliminary part of his treatment is the clearing of the patient's system of the baneful effects of pernicious drugs, swallowed in the vain hope of their giving relief.

A personal interview with Mr. Gilbert Dale can be arranged by writing to his Secretary, 68 Holland Park, London, W.



MR. GILBERT DALE.

Readers are earnestly advised to send for GILBERT DALE'S deeply interesting book, "Epilepsy: its Causes. Symptoms and Treatment," published at One Shilling net. This book will be sent post free in return for six penny stamps forwarded to THE COLSTON PUBLISHING CO. LTD., 1 Bond Street House, 14 Clifford Street, Bond Street, W.1.



SECTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

STORY-WRITING FOR CHILDREN

By "DAPHNE"

"ONCE upon a time there lived a brown hen. And one day the brown hen laid a nice white egg and she went about offering it to everybody she met.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo,
I've laid an egg for you."

she said to Mrs. Duck and Mrs. Pig and ever so many other people, but nobody seemed to want the nice white egg. At last, quite sad and unhappy because nobody wanted her beautiful egg, the brown hen went home, only to find that while she was away the egg had hatched out into a dear little fluffy chicken. And then the brown hen was ever so pleased and glad that she hadn't succeeded in giving her egg away."

A Story for Children

I have not room to publish the story in full, but that is the substance of the prize-winning tale in our recent Children's Story Competition. It is written by FLORENCE COLLETT, of Leeds, and it is a good example of what a story for very little folks should be. It is simple, yet not foolishly so. It has no involved or complicated plot to confuse the little ones; the characters are all such as would be familiar to children; the two lines of verse the brown hen uses whenever she offers her egg to anyone are just

what a child loves to memorise and repeat; and with all these other excellences the story is told in a very charming way.

It is true that hens do not say "Cock-a-doodle-doo" in real life, nor, as a general rule, do eggs hatch out into chickens during their mother's absence—as no doubt some of our up-to-date little people will be quick to point out! But these details do not alter the fact that "The Brown Hen and the Baby Chicken" is an excellent story for the very little ones, and fully deserves the prize it has gained. And, after all, there is one very obvious retort to objectors open to the story-teller. It is a Once-Upon-a-Time hen, and Once-Upon-a-Time hens and eggs are not bound by the same laws that govern ordinary fowls.

CHRISTIAN MILNE wrote a delightful little story about a black kitten that went to Fairyland, and GRACE NEW a dainty tale of a wooden horse with a broken leg that grew into a wonderful rocking-horse when he and his little mistress were alone. Either of these stories was good enough to have gained the prize had not Florence Collett's entry surpassed them. Both these writers receive Special Commendation.

Highly Commended.—Jean Birkmyre, Mary Silcock, Grace Marian Briscall, Sona Rosa Burstein, Doris May Goadman, Frances

THE QUIVER

E. Judge, H. Edith Dredge, Muriel Arnott Grainger, Rhoda Walne, Gladys Huddart, Catherine Agnes Park, Audrey Pattison, Monica Carter, Rhoda Bennett, Marjorie Bell, Mabel T. Duncan, Christian Marian Mills, Greta Costain, Marian McClelland.

Advertisement Competition

There were some very good entries for this competition, so far as the drawings themselves went. The *ideas* were not quite as original as they might have been, and some artists who find their names missing from the honours list may console themselves with thinking that it was perhaps more through lack of originality than lack of artistic ability that they failed.

The prize is awarded to MARJORIE BISHOP, Eastbourne, for her advertisement for "Mackintosh's Toffee de Luxe." The work of the following competitors is highly commended :

H. Godwin, May Littlewood, Edith M. Chisholm-Clark, H. Gilbert, Margery Birck, T. G. J. Keet, B. Wharton, Margery Frances Child, Kenneth J. B. Topley, M. E. Luck, Monica Young.

New Drawing Competition

This month a prize of Half a Guinea will be given for the best drawing of "A Girl's Head." Studies may be in pencil, pen-and-ink, or charcoal, but they must not be done in colour. Don't forget to certify upon your entry that your work is original.

A Child's Poem

A prize of a Handsome Volume will be given for the best "Poem for a Child" received at this office by December 20th. Please note that it is to be *for* a child—not *by* a child, *of* a child, or *to* a child—at least, not necessarily so! Poems must not be more than twenty lines in length.

Rules for Competitors

1. All work must be original and must be certified as such by the competitor. In the case of literary competitions, one side of the paper only must be written upon.

2. The competitor's name, age, and address must be clearly written upon each entry—not enclosed on a separate piece of paper—and all loose pages must be pinned together.

3. No entry can be returned unless accompanied by a fully-stamped and addressed envelope large enough to contain it. Stamps alone are insufficient.

4. All entries must be received at this office by December 20th, 1917. They should be addressed "Competitions," THE QUIVER, La Belle Sauvage, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.

Story-Writing for Children

And now we come to the subject of this month's talk—story-writing for children. It is strange how few of the readers who entered for this competition seem to have grasped the main essentials. I should not like to have to tell you how many little girls in these stories went to sleep and woke up to find themselves in Fairyland; nor the number of little boys who were cruel to their pets or naughty to their nurses and were duly made to see the error of their ways. A great many people wrote obscure allegories about the stars and the birds and the pretty flowers which Mother's little darling must not pick for fear of hurting the poor dear things! And a great many people who wrote quite nice little stories forgot that they were to be for very little folks, and sent in tales that might have appealed to children of nine or ten or even older.

Forget You are Grown Up

Now, when you are writing for children you must try to forget that you are grown up. You must do your very best to remember how you thought and felt when you were a child. Children are very unaffected and honest and sincere, as a rule, and though they love to make-believe, and adore anybody who will play whole-heartedly at "Let's Pretend" with them, yet they hate gush and sentiment, and, above all, they detest being laughed at. Laugh with them, if you will, but never for one moment let them suspect that you are amused at them, or you will lose your place for ever in their affection. You will become just an ordinary grown-up person to them, and though they may be very fond of you, and even grow to love you very much, yet you will never again be the wonderful, magical playmate they once imagined you were. And so, when you are telling a story to a child, don't mimic the baby way it talks. Use good plain English, and make your little hero or heroine say "I love you, Mother," not "Me luves 'oo, deawh Mama!" :

Never Play Down to a Child

There is one great secret in writing for children: take them seriously. This does not mean that you need always be serious with them. You may laugh with them, play

REGISTERED TRADE MARK.

STEEDMAN'S SOOTHING POWDERS



THE
PICTURE
OF
HEALTH

HER MOTHER SAYS

"I thought you might like to see my little girl's photo. She is just three years old. Since she was a baby of four months I have given her Steedman's Powders, and I always found them not only cooling, but cleansing and refreshing. I used to give them on the same day each week, and if I happened to miss, she was cross and fretful. She cut all her teeth without my knowing, thanks to those priceless powders."

Tottenham, Sept. 29th, 1915.

THESE POWDERS CONTAIN

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NO POISON.

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THE QUEEN'S HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN,

Hackney Road,
Bethnal Green,
E.

The Earl of Shrewsbury,
President.
130 beds always full.
£10,000 a year expenditure.
Assured Income under £1,000.

In late "North Eastern" Hospital.
10,000 Out-Patients annually.
Inquiry System in force for prevention of abuse.
£7,000 Attendances.

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HELP.

T. Glenton-Kerr, Sec.

THE RANYARD MISSION

Help urgently needed in support of Staff of

**100 Trained Mission Workers
90 Trained District Nurses**

working in poor London Districts.

The opportunities are greater than ever for getting into touch with the people and seeking to build up character and home life.

Health work of all kinds is of the utmost value to the Nation, and a District Nurse can do much to prevent infant and children's diseases from leading to permanent ill-health, and to alleviate the suffering of old and young.

Both Mission Workers and Nurses live amongst their people as friends and can help them through all the anxieties, sorrows, and temptations of the present time, and in all the terror of air raids.

Workers must be withdrawn unless further financial help is received.

Address: The Secretaries, 25 Russell Square, W.C.1.

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200 BRANCHES. 70 LANDS & COLONIES SUPPLIED.

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HEADQUARTERS, QUEENS ROAD, BRISTOL.
100 PAGE ILLUSTRATED LIST. FREE ON APPLICATION.

Famished HAIR CELLS

Hair-failure is due to starved roots and cells. All the legion of hair troubles vanish if you strike at the root. It is the same in every ill—you must go right to the heart of the trouble. What the grey, languishing, dropping hairs

call for

is an adequate food—a real nutriment. ROWLAND'S MACASSAR OIL gives an immediate new vitality to the feeble roots and the "feeding" cells beneath them. It produces a soft, silky sheen and texture; a full, luxuriant growth, radiating a true natural hair-health. Supplied in Gold Tint for fair hair.

ROWLAND'S MACASSAR OIL

is sold in 3/6, 7/-, and 10/6 bottles, by Stores, Chemists, and ROWLANDS, 67 Hatton Garden, London.

WAR—CONSUMPTION

THE Tubercle Bacillus is still claiming its victims, and, unfortunately, many of our men who have escaped the Huns' bullets have only done so to be claimed by this insidious germ, the Tubercle Bacillus. There is, however, a remedy to combat it, although it has not yet been officially recognised, and anyone suffering from Consumption or Tuberculosis, in whatever form, will be wise to write for full particulars of the Stevens treatment; or, if full details of the case are sent, a supply of the remedy itself will be despatched, specially suitable, on the distinct understanding that nothing whatever need be paid for it unless the patient be perfectly satisfied with the benefit received, and considers the progress made warrants its continuance.

Many who were hopeless cases of Consumption a short time ago are now fighting for their King and Country hale and hearty, and thank Stevens' Consumption Cure for their recoveries. The following are just a few of them; the addresses given are of their homes. Those suffering from the disease should write to them direct and get first-hand evidence that this wretched disease can really be cured, and men, after suffering from it even in its last stages, fitted for actual war service:—

Mr. A. ARMSTRONG, Wilks Hill, Quebec, Durham—Tubercular Spine. He was discharged from the Newcastle Infirmary as a hopeless case, as they could do no more for him. Was cured by Stevens' treatment, and when last heard of on May 17th had been serving in the trenches in France for eleven months.

Mr. G. E. JAMES, 29 High Oak, Pensnett, Dudley, Staffs, was cured by Stevens' remedy after sanatorium treatment proved a failure. When last heard of on June 27th had been eleven months in France with the British Expeditionary Force.

Mr. E. JONES, Tygwyn Farm, Llangoedmore, Cardigan, was cured by Stevens' Consumption Cure, and when last heard of on July 7th was on active service, having been passed in Class A1 on every medical examination.

Mr. P. J. WHETTER, 115 Elder Road, Canton, Cardiff, had diseased lungs, a cough, expectoration, night sweats, and affected throat. After taking Stevens' Consumption Cure was able to go with the Expeditionary Force to France in 1915, and was still serving his King and Country when last heard of in September.

Mr. SYDNEY SKIPWORTH, 7 Ritches Road, Harringay, N., after operation for tubercular glands in the Tottenham Hospital without success, appeared to be in a dying condition when commencing Stevens' treatment, was cured seven years ago, and when last heard of, on September 21st, was in France serving his King and Country.

Mr. C. RYDEN, 2 Regent Street, Teignmouth, Devon, was sent home from Canada suffering from Consumption, was cured by Stevens' Consumption Cure, and when last heard of, in September, was still keeping well, and serving with the Forces in Egypt.

Mr. E. PRATT, 29 Mansfield Street, Foss Islands Road, York, was cured by Stevens' Consumption Cure after Tuberculin, among other so-called remedies, had failed. When last heard from, on July 25th, had been serving nineteen months with the British Expeditionary Force in France.

Mr. H. BUNCE, 2 Short Street, High Wycombe, Bucks, recovered by the use of Stevens' Consumption Cure after the usual remedies had failed to even give relief, and when last heard of, on Sept. 21st, was still keeping quite well, serving with the Colours.

Mr. C. LARCOMBE, who lived at 35 Bath Street, Chard, Somerset, after suffering from Consumption, with a cough, expectoration, and affected throat, took the Stevens treatment, was cured, and when last heard of in September was still in the best of health, serving with the Army in Egypt.

Mr. G. SABIN, who lived at 2 Bestwood Road, Hucknall Torkard, Notts, was suffering from Consumption, bringing up a pint of sputum in twenty-four hours, throat also affected. This was, apparently, quite a hopeless case, but, after being treated by Stevens' Consumption Cure, he got well enough to pass for active service with the British Expeditionary Force in France, where he was sent in Feb., 1915, and has been wounded three times.

Only Address :

CHAS. H. STEVENS, 204 & 206 Worple Road, Wimbledon,
LONDON, S.W.19.

STORY-WRITING FOR CHILDREN

with them, joke with them, even tease them a little so long as you do it tactfully and know when to stop. But never give them cause to think that you are "playing down" to them. Their joys and troubles are very real to them—think how real your joys and troubles were to you when you were a child—and you must learn to understand and appreciate this fact if you ever want to be a successful writer for children.

Pointing the Moral

Then, of course, you must steer clear of a very involved plot. The simpler the story is the better, though do not make it too simple and neglect to put in any plot at all! The story must be short when you are writing for very little children, or few of your listeners will hear it out to the end. The language must be clear and plain, though you need not go out of your way to drag in short words, and the moral must be good. But please, please, *please* do not write your story just for the sake of pointing a moral! That may have been all very well fifty years ago, but no editor of to-day would dream of running a children's paper on the lines of the Fairchild Family and Edgeworth Frank; though some contributors seem to imagine that they do, and are quite hurt when their stories of good little girls and bad little boys are returned to them.

One day I shall set another children's story competition, since this one has proved so popular, and then I shall be able to see if any of you have profited by these hints.

Correspondents Wanted

Here are one or two notices which were unavoidably held over from the November list:

A LONELY SOLDIER, wounded on the Somme and now stationed at home, is in search of a genuine friend. A girl who is fond of books preferred.

READER, seventeen years of age, interested in reading and photography and working for matric, wants a pen-friend. Please write to JEAN GILCHRIST ROBB.

HELEN ANNE ROBB, aged 19, wants to correspond with readers about her own age, either sex. She works as a shorthand typist in a Government Department, and is interested in books, music, needlework, and many other things.

WALTER C. HOPE wants correspondents. He lives in a country town in Surrey and would very much appreciate a pen-friend.

A House Parlourmaid, working in London, would like to correspond with a girl from Scotland or Wales. Write to LONELY.

Books Recommended

I did not have room to give you any book titles last month, and there isn't much space to give a long list now, but here are just a few which have been recommended by various readers :

Maud Diver : "The Great Amulet," "Candles in the Wind." "Barltineus": "Naval Occasions." Ethel M. Dell : "The Way of an Eagle."—Recommended by GLADYS FANSETT.

Gertrude Page : "Paddy-the-Next-Best-Thing," "The Pathway." Bessie Marchant : "A Canadian Farm Mystery," "The Ferry-House Girls," "A Girl and a Caravan," "A Mysterious Inheritance," "A Girl of Distinction," "The Princess of Serbia," "The Loyalty of Hester Hope." Jean Webster : "Daddy-Long-Legs," "Patty and Priscilla."—Recommended by ELLA DADLEY.

J. C. Snaith : "The Sailor." Horace Annesley Vache : "The Triumph of Tim." Florence Converse : "Long Phil."—Recommended by HELEN ANNE ROBB.

"The Quiver" Amateur Magazine

Will all those readers who have written to me about THE QUIVER Amateur Magazine suggested by MARIAN BROOKS, please write to Marian Brooks about it? Send your letters under cover to me, and I will then forward them to her. Don't be content just to write and tell me how much you like the idea, but write a letter to Marian too, so that I can put you into touch with her straight away.

Criticism of MSS.

Readers can have their stories, etc., criticised at the following rates :

Prose.—MSS. under 10,000 words, 1s.; over 10,000 words, 2s. 6d.

Poetry.—Each poem, 6d. In the case of very short poems, not exceeding twelve lines each, two may be enclosed for the one fee.

Stamped addressed envelopes must be sent with all MSS. submitted for criticism.

Hoping that you will all have a very happy Christmas, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

DAPHNE.





CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

HOEVER much we may cut down the list of Christmas gifts for older people, it will be generally recognised that the children must have special consideration. We are only young once, and so much of the youth of the new generation has been overshadowed by the ever-lengthening war. One thinks instinctively of toys—and toys suggest the "Made in Germany" of unpopular renown. No ; this year toys will be few and far between—and more costly than lasting, it may be averred.

"Buy me a Book!"

May I make the suggestion that during the War the best, most patriotic present for a child is a book ?

"Please buy me a children's book—about a pig," lisped a little four-year-old to me the other day, and children from three to sixteen will be more sure to appreciate a book than any other present chosen on the "off-chance."

May I suggest a copy of "Cassell's Children's Annual" for the average boy or girl up to nine or ten years old? It is replete with good things, and has a magnificent show of coloured pictures by all the leading artists, as well as stories by the best writers.

For the real boy there's no present so "stunning" as a book full of adventures, and in the "British Boy's Annual" you will find a full budget by the leading boys' authors, such as Captain Gilson, Captain F. S. Breton, Captain F. H. Shaw, Fleet Surgeon J. T. Jeans, etc.

For the normal girl, I do not think I could commend anything better than the "British Girl's Annual," because of its catholicity of interest. It takes in the hobbies of the outdoor girl as well as the indoor girl, and gives a full number of school stories.

My own boyhood favourite, "Little Folks," I am glad to meet again. It looks a brighter and livelier volume than when I saw it first, but then boys and girls have been let off the leash more, and in its new garb "Little Folks"

indulges their taste to the utmost. Profusely illustrated stories and humorous picture tales for the "littler ones" make it an ideal family book.

A splendid Christmas present is "My Book of Best Stories from History," illustrated with twelve full-page coloured pictures by A. C. Michael. In the same series I can recommend "My Book of Beautiful Legends" and "My Book of Best Fairy Tales."

For the older boy who "wants to see how the wheels go round," Edward Cressy has just written a book called "All about Engines," generously illustrated with photographs of locomotives, marine engines, pumps, motor cars, aeroplanes ; in fact, every type of modern machine.

Most of us like, in the leisure of Christmas time, to read the old story book. I have not the space to describe the volumes in Cassell's Empire Library, but for "lads' lure" I do not think you could better such volumes as "With Haig on the Somme," by D. H. Parry, "When Beatty Kept the Seas," by Captain F. H. Shaw, and "The Boy's Book of Buccaneers," by Eric Wood.

The Girls' Favourite

Do you know the Girls' Favourite Library ? It's a capital series, and in such new volumes as E. E. Cowper's mystery story "The Hill of Broom," Augusta Seaman's "The Lass of Richmond Hill," and "Six Little New Zealanders" by Esther Glen you have a ripping trio of adventure tales.

I have over-run my space now, and find I have still more than a score of books to mention which are all worth being chosen as Christmas gifts.

Let me command you, then, to write a post card to Messrs. Cassell & Co., La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4, and mention that I suggested your sending for an illustrated catalogue of boys' and girls' books, and you can browse over the details and charming pictures of these books at your leisure.

R. L.

Make your Christmas Puddings & Mincemeat

with

Shredded "ATORA" The Handy Suet

"ATORA" is the pure extract of FRESH BEEF SUET, READY SHREDDED for PUDDINGS, MINCEMEAT, etc., in BLOCKS for frying, cooking and all purposes.

— 1½ lb. goes as far as 2 lbs. raw suet.

NO CHOPPING, NO WASTE!
ALWAYS READY FOR USE!

Sold by all grocers & stores
in 1 lb. and ½ lb. cartons.

Sole Manufacturers:

HUGON & CO., Ltd., MANCHESTER.



The Unseen Hand.

ROME AND THE WAR AND COMING EVENTS IN BRITAIN.

By WATCHMAN, Author of "Rome and Germany."

The author of this book clearly shows who are our most bitter and dangerous, because secret enemies—the UNSEEN HAND fighting against us, the existence of which many now recognise but have failed to identify.

Price 3s. 6d. net; postage 3d.

McBRIDE, NAST & CO.,
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C. BRANDAUER & Co., LTD.,
CIRCULAR-POINTED PENS.

SEVEN PRIZE
MEDALS.



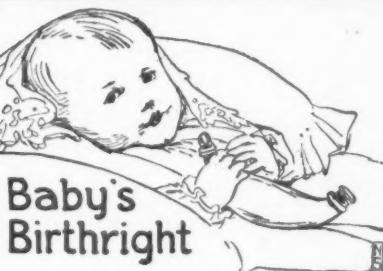
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nor Spurt.

Attention is
also drawn to the

**NEW PATENT
ANTI-BLOTTING
PENS.** Sample Box of
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Works: BIRMINGHAM.

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Baby's Birthright

BABY'S birthright is health—vigorous and joyous health. Lay the foundation now of YOUR baby's health by a dietary of Frame Food.

Frame Food is a perfect baby food. It contains all the elements necessary to build up strong bones and firm muscles. Frame Food Babies are sturdy babies. Thousands of sturdy, chubby, laughing boys and girls owe their health and good spirits, their sound teeth and strong limbs, to the fact that they have been reared on Frame Food.

WRITE FOR FREE SAMPLE.

FRAME FOOD CO.

37 Standen Road, Southfields, S.W.18





CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

HOWEVER much we may cut down the list of Christmas gifts for older people, it will be generally recognised that the children must have special consideration. We are only young once, and so much of the youth of the new generation has been overshadowed by the ever-lengthening war. One thinks instinctively of toys—and toys suggest the "Made in Germany" of unpopular renown.

No; this year toys will be few and far between—and more costly than lasting, it may be averred.

"Buy me a Book!"

May I make the suggestion that during the War the best, most patriotic present for a child is a book?

"Please buy me a children's book—about a pig," lisped a little four-year-old to me the other day, and children from three to sixteen will be more sure to appreciate a book than any other present chosen on the "off-chance."

May I suggest a copy of "Cassell's Children's Annual" for the average boy or girl up to nine or ten years old? It is replete with good things, and has a magnificent show of coloured pictures by all the leading artists, as well as stories by the best writers.

For the real boy there's no present so "stunning" as a book full of adventures, and in the "British Boy's Annual" you will find a full budget by the leading boys' authors, such as Captain Gilson, Captain F. S. Brereton, Captain F. H. Shaw, Fleet Surgeon J. T. Jeans, etc.

For the normal girl, I do not think I could commend anything better than the "British Girl's Annual," because of its catholicity of interest. It takes in the hobbies of the outdoor girl as well as the indoor girl, and gives a full number of school stories.

My own boyhood favourite, "Little Folks," I am glad to meet again. It looks a brighter and livelier volume than when I saw it first, but then boys and girls have been let off the leash more, and in its new garb "Little Folks"

indulges their taste to the utmost. Profusely illustrated stories and humorous picture tales for the "littler ones" make it an ideal family book.

A splendid Christmas present is "My Book of Best Stories from History," illustrated with twelve full-page coloured pictures by A. C. Michael. In the same series I can recommend "My Book of Beautiful Legends" and "My Book of Best Fairy Tales."

For the older boy who "wants to see how the wheels go round," Edward Cressy has just written a book called "All about Engines," generously illustrated with photographs of locomotives, marine engines, pumps, motor cars, aeroplanes; in fact, every type of modern machine.

Most of us like, in the leisure of Christmas time, to read the old story book. I have not the space to describe the volumes in Cassell's Empire Library, but for "lads' lure" I do not think you could better such volumes as "With Haig on the Somme," by D. H. Parry, "When Beatty Kept the Seas," by Captain F. H. Shaw, and "The Boy's Book of Buccaneers," by Eric Wood.

The Girls' Favourite

Do you know the Girls' Favourite Library? It's a capital series, and in such new volumes as E. E. Cowper's mystery story "The Hill of Broom," Augusta Seaman's "The Lass of Richmond Hill," and "Six Little New Zealanders" by Esther Glen you have a ripping trio of adventure tales.

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For Infants,
Growing Children, & Adults

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MELLIN'S FOOD THE FRESH MILK FOOD

Obtainable from all Chemists.

Send for a sample of Mellin's Food and valuable Handbook for Mothers, "How to Feed the Baby," free on request. Address: Sample Dept., MELLIN'S FOOD, Ltd., Peckham, London, S.E.

Food

This is the Game every Tommy wants



Draughts is the most popular game the world has ever known. Every soldier knows how to play it. Here's a Draughts Outfit that he can play anywhere—in the dugouts, in hospital—to keep his mind away from the war during odd minutes.

The Stud Draughts Outfit

[Patent] No. 99,015.] The Pocket Draughts Game for Anywhere

This Draughts Outfit is invented to meet the needs of Soldiers, Sailors, Travellers, etc. in the trenches, on board, in hospital, in the train, in the home—anywhere. The Pieces will not fall out of position. The game can be dismantled and the Board folded up for the pocket—the game being resumed from the same point at any odd moment. Wounded Soldiers in adjacent beds can play Stud Draughts without inconvenience by tossing the entire Outfit from one bed to another after each move. Travelling companions can commence a game of Stud Draughts on one journey together, and complete it on the next.

Folds like a handkerchief—the Pieces clasp on.
Send one to every Soldier or Sailor Friend.

Sent to any address, at the front, in hospital, or at home. Prices 2s6d (Regular), 3s6d (extra strong), 5s6d (Morocco finish), and 7s6d (De Luxe Outfit). Postage 2d extra in British Isles or B.E.F. Foreign postage extra. 10% discount on dozen lots for Hospitals, etc. Postage paid on one doz. and upwards. AGENTS WANTED.

The Stud Draughts Co., 2 Mark Lane, Manchester.

HERE'S A SPECIAL SHOE BARGAIN

offered to the readers of "Quiver."
To clear our stock of this

RIFE BROGUE SHOE for Ladies

we are offering them at the pre-war price—15/- per pair. Sizes from 3 to 7, with the exception of 4½, 5, and 6½.

Famed for Durability, Style and Comfort. This Shoe cannot be repeated now at less than 50 per cent. increase.

Order your pair **NOW!**

Made from reliable Black or Calf Leather. Stout walking Sole. Low Heel. Small size (see drawing of shoe) £1.50 per pair.

A. T. HOGG (No. 169) STRATHMIGLO, FIFE.

The Pioneer and Leader of the "Boots-by-Post" Trade,



PRE-WAR
PRICE
15/6

DELICIOUS COFFEE.

RED WHITE & BLUE

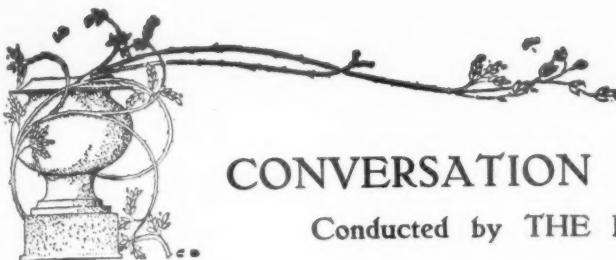
For Breakfast & after Dinner.



Folds up like a handkerchief.



The Stud Draughts Outfit



CONVERSATION CORNER

Conducted by THE EDITOR

The Economy of Christmas

THE spirit of Christmas is not easily repressed. The shops are darkened, the display is restricted, there is an urgent appeal from the Prime Minister and those in authority for economy. Yet people are buying and selling in haste. The outward semblance of good cheer is here, so far as luxury articles are concerned. The big drapery manufacturers, we are told, have quadrupled their profits, and there is no evident sign of the people donning sack-cloth and ashes. When money is abundant it is difficult to restrain people from spending it. This Christmas without lights will not be without luxury, it is to be feared.



Where We Must Not Economise

EVERY responsible person who has the true interests of the country at heart must cordially approve the call for economy. We can spend Christmas just as well without a surfeit of useless trifles passing from friend to friend; we can appreciate the Divine incarnation just as well without over-indulgence in eating and drinking. Let us economise, even in our Christmas feastings. But there is no need at all to economise in the *spirit of Christmas*. With all our finery, it is to be feared that this year we shall be lacking in that. War does not tend to kindness of heart, peace and goodwill to all men. Generosity of soul, willingness to suffer and be kind, the love that rejoices in all things—these are more scarce than the tea and the sugar, the things to eat and to wear, whose absence we are so quick to deplore.

Let there be no attempt, therefore, to economise in the true spirit of Christmas. Indeed, though it be difficult, try, wherever you are, to infuse that gracious influence into the quickly passing festival, and make Christmas a time of expansion of heart, of uplifting of soul.

A Suggestion

MAY I very respectfully suggest that, as a part of our Christmas, we make an effort *to give*? Not the incongruous assortment of useless trifles we feel called upon to present to our friends. These, possibly, can be dispensed with in view of the call for economy. To preserve and increase the true spirit of Christmas there is nothing like giving where we do not expect to receive again. We can give out of the fullness of our heart our sympathy with the suffering; we can give our pity for those whom the war has specially hurt; we can give our love to the needy and the lonely. But there is a place for money, too, and we can give that in proportion as we have been preserved in body and fortune during this year of trials.

Have you been kept safe from the terrors of war, from invasion and submarine, from sudden death by Zeppelin or Gotha, from famine and fever? Then give a Christmas thank-offering. There are so many agencies that depend upon your generous thought that it should be easy for your money to find its way into broad avenues of service.

A Huge Family

FOR instance, there is Dr. Barnardo's. You complain of the extra cost of bacon, the high price of meat, the shortage of tea and sugar. What must it mean to support such a large family as Barnardo's provides for day by day? Thousands of men have laid down their lives that you might dwell in safety, and institutions like Barnardo's are caring for their orphans, training them for future usefulness in the service of their country instead of letting them drift into a life of dependence or crime. Cannot you spare a trifle for Dr. Barnardo's Homes?



Without Hope of Recovery

THERE is something hopeful about the work among the wounded; they may

THE QUIVER

be restored to health and strength again. But there is something particularly pathetic about the cases of men—and women too—who have no human hope of recovery, but must just wait with what patience they may for the call that will sooner or later come. The British Home and Hospital for Incurables makes a very strong appeal to the heart that has the true Christian spirit. The Home is doing its best to make the remnants of life happy for those who cannot hope to regain health and strength any more. This institution, founded in 1861, is for the benefit of middle-class people only. All the benefits conferred are for life. Those who are in the Home at Streatham, and the hundreds of pensioners who receive £20 a year, are provided for until the end of their days. Will you offer a Christmas gift to this excellent charity?



Nearly a Quarter War Orphans

WE turn from those who cannot be cured to those who can be saved—and who, in their turn, can save the nation. The Homes for Little Boys are established at Farningham and Swanley—on those Kentish hills where may be heard the sound of the guns in France and Flanders. Boys have gone out from the Homes to lay down their lives in the Army and the Navy. Hundreds more are repaying their debt to the Homes by living upright, useful lives in the Mercantile Marine, on the land, in the cities and villages of Britain, and all over the world. At the present time nearly a quarter of the lads in the Homes are war orphans. To subscribe to the Homes for Little Boys is an investment of the really highest order. Have you subscribed?



Real Patriotism

I CANNOT help feeling that it is patriotism of the highest order to give generous support just now to those institutions that are concerned with the saving of the young life of the nation. The war has made deplorable toll of that splendid British manhood that was the pride of the race. It is heart-breaking to realise how many of our finest have been laid on the altar of war. Who shall take the place of these? The younger generation must be conserved as our most precious heritage. The National Children's Home, with its branches all over the country, has been doing a magnificent work, quietly but steadily, for child welfare. More than 10,000 children have been rescued and helped, and there are more than 2,000 now being cared for in the Home. I cannot imagine a more deserving institution

than this, nor one more worthy of your most hearty support this Christmas. Will you send a gift to the National Children's Home?



The Needs of the Soul

THERE are needs other than those of the body. As a people we do not live by bread and tea and sugar, necessary though these may be. Our national stamina is built up from our habits of thought, our moral vision, our religion. In making your Christmas offerings do not neglect the spiritual in caring for the material. For instance, there is the London City Mission, that for so many years has been doing a splendid work among the varied classes that comprise our great metropolitan population. The L.C.M. has had a stern fight, financially, since war broke out. Will you help to make that fight a successful one?



Colonies and Allies

THE work of the Colonial and Continental Missionary Society makes its appeal to all who look for the spiritual strengthening of our Colonies and our Allies. Missionaries are at work in the far parts of Canada, as well as in the war-stricken zones of Europe, and they need the financial backing with which no work of this character can exist. Will you help?



Count Your Blessings

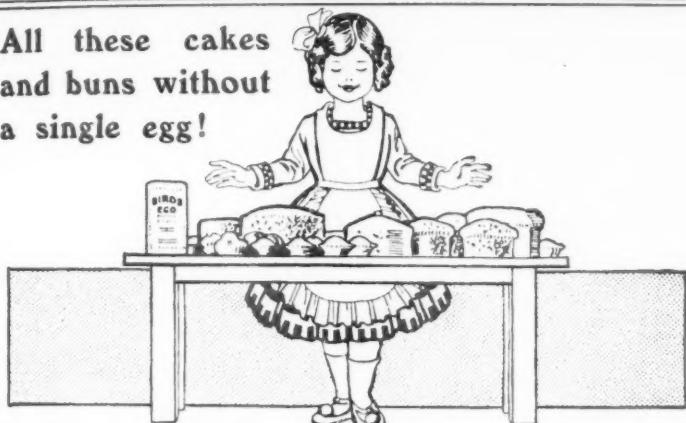
HAVE I asked too much? In spite of, and all through, the war, we have been blessed. Shall we not help without stint those whose lot in life is not so fortunate as our own? Do not banish the spirit of Christmas from your midst. Keep the feast, but let your generosity be tempered with imagination. Extend your hospitality beyond the confines of your own family circle. Embrace to your heart your brothers and sisters of God's wider family, and in serving their need you yourself shall be richly blessed.

I shall be only too pleased to receive gifts for any of the institutions mentioned in these pages, or money may be sent for apportionment at the Editor's discretion. All sums received are forwarded without any deduction whatsoever. Make your cheques payable to Cassell and Co., Ltd., and address, "The Editor, THE QUIVER, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4."

Will readers everywhere please accept my heartiest Christmas greetings?

The Editor

All these cakes
and buns without
a single egg!



No wonder we can always have delicious cakes and buns—even though eggs are so dear. BIRD'S EGG SUBSTITUTE makes us quite independent of eggs for cooking. A single tin will go as far as 2/6 worth of eggs, and makes just as light, delicious and rich cakes and buns as if we used new-laid eggs.

BIRD'S EGG SUBSTITUTE is invaluable in the kitchen. One teaspoonful of this golden powder imparts the richness, flavor and appearance of new-laid eggs to puddings, cakes, buns, batter for fish, etc.

Excellent recipes with each tin and packet.

BIRD'S EGG SUBSTITUTE

MILLIONS OF BLADES WASTED ANNUALLY— DON'T
WASTE YOURS

GET
A CLEMAK
Royal
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THE PERFECT PRINCIPLE OF RAZOR SHARPENING

FOR GILLETTE BLADES

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-OR-
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FREE
FROM THE

CLEMAK SAFETY RAZOR CO.
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A PERFECT HEAD OF HAIR

Ladies

who possess a beautiful head of hair will generally tell you of the great care they have always taken of it.

The hair is one of the greatest and most fascinating of female charms; but, if neglected, it instantly shows that neglect by fading, losing its gloss, becoming hard and brittle, and by splitting and falling out. The secret lies in the health of the scalp.

Regesan

KING OF HEALTH

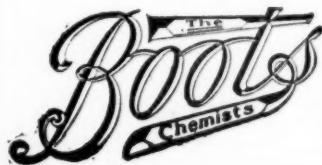
DRY and WET SHAMPOOS

THESE are the only safe and satisfactory way of maintaining the perfect health of the scalp and the active life of the hair. Regesan is quite different to ordinary shampoos; it is far easier to use, more effective and pleasant. Its creamy lather cleanses the whole scalp and leaves the hair fresh, fluffy, and sweetly and delicately perfumed. Regesan Hair Powder is an ideal dry shampoo for night or morning use. It enables you to thoroughly cleanse and liven the hair without wetting it.

It is just a matter of putting into the hair a teaspoonful of the powder, leaving it for five minutes and brushing out again. But they are so refreshing, and you find them so useful after walking, cycling, driving or motoring; they remove all dust and grease. According to experts, a Regesan wet shampoo once a week and three Regesan dry shampoos, at two days' interval, may be taken as the correct treatment which the hair should receive.

Price 1½d. each; box of seven 9d.

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Chief London Branch:
182 Regent Street, W.
555 Branches in town and country.

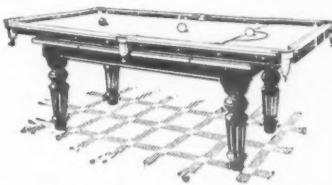
Boots Pure Drug Co., Ltd.



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why not have
RILEY'S BILLIARDS
in *your* Home?

You play as you pay—and Seven Days' Free Trial Guarantees Your Satisfaction

WHEN a Riley Billiard Table comes into the house the young people generally take up the game with such zest that their play rivals their elders' in proficiency. And this great contributor to the "home spirit" has the great advantage that it yields a leisure-pleasure to the grown-ups equally with the children. On a Riley Miniature Table you can play the most delicate strokes that give an adult enjoyment—yet the play is so easy that the children put an enthusiasm into it that is remarkable.



Riley Miniature Billiard Table shown resting on ordinary table.

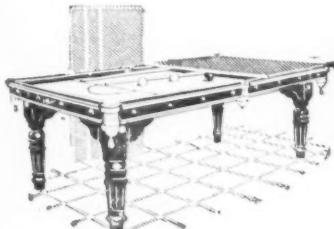
Riley's no-trouble way to pay

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instalments of **10s.** Any other price of Table in 15 equal monthly payments.

Cash prices are as follows:—

Size 4 ft. 4 in. by 2 ft. 4 in.	... £4 10 0	Or in	6/6
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Riley's "Combine" Billiard and Dining Table.

Seven Days' Free Trial
Couldn't be a better guarantee of satisfaction than Riley's promise to accept the Table back if after seven days' trial you are dissatisfied. Send first instalment at once and make this test quite free.

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Loud n Showrooms, 117 Aldersgate Street, E.C.

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on receipt of post card full detailed Illustrated Catalogue of Billiard and Dining Tables, and small or full-sized Tables.

Cosy Dryness for the Feet IN Snowy, Rainy, Frosty Weather.



Norwell's 'Perth' Brogues

"Direct from Scotland"



Norwell's guarantee full satisfaction with every transaction or cheerfully refund every penny of your money.

Write Now for New Footwear Catalogue.

Well-shod, there is keen enjoyment for outdoor folk in the winter health tramps.

help the springy-step and ensure freedom from foot-weariness, damp and discomfort.

For every Norwell model is built with instep firmly arched, with full support for the ankle, of flexible waterproof leather that gives long wear, and is cosily finished inside.

There is full money-value in each pair of Norwell brogues.

D. NORWELL & SON,
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Specialists in good-wearing footwear.

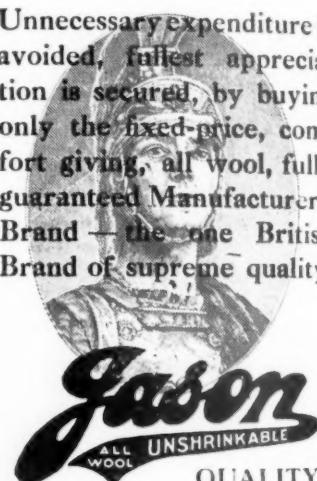
Estd. over 100 years.

Foreign orders receive special attention. Orders sent post free in Britain, foreign postage extra.



JASON Presents give full value,— and debar profit-eering. Give Jason to all your friends

Unnecessary expenditure is avoided, fullest appreciation is secured, by buying only the fixed-price, comfort giving, all wool, fully guaranteed Manufacturers' Brand — the one British Brand of supreme quality.



Stockings and Socks for Ladies, Children and Men

The manufacturers of the premier British Stockings and Socks are determined that the public shall receive full Jason value. Dealers must not make more than the full and fair profit which is fixed by the price printed on the Jason Tab by the manufacturers.

See the Jason Tab on every pair, and pay only the price marked on the Tab.

Jason "Elite" Range,	2/- per pair
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Jason "Triumph" Range,	2/- per pair
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Jason "Charm" Range,	3/- per pair
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Buy Jason at the fixed prices. In case of difficulty, write
W. TYLER, SONS & CO., LEICESTER.



"BALLOONS."

Artistic morning wear for ladies of taste—and for their children—is being extensively designed of Cepéa Serge this season.

Cepéa Serge inspires tasteful dress—and its hard wear, fast colours, and guarantee against shrinkage constitute a valuable aid to war economy.

CEPÉA SERGE

The Cotton Fabric with the Serge Finish.

Light grounds with a multitude of stripes in various designs, in pink, blue, helio, grey, black, green, etc.; navy or black grounds with pin striped effects, or in pretty plain shades of the latest colourings.

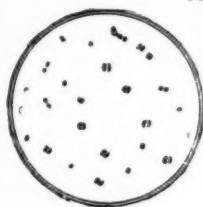
Price **1/6 $\frac{1}{2}$** for Light Grounds. **1/9** for Dark Grounds per yard

Sold in the piece or made up into many tasteful ready-for-wear Garments. See the name Cepéa Serge on the Selvedge and on the Tab. From all Drapers, Outfitters, Dressmakers, and Stores.

Range of Patterns, full particulars, and name of nearest Cepéa Serge Dealer will be sent on receipt of post card.

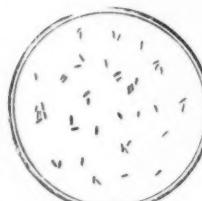
The Calico Printers' Association, Ltd., Advt. Dept.,
St. James' Buildings, Manchester.





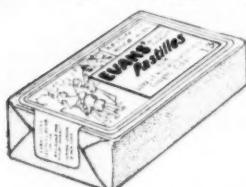
Even in perfectly healthy throats there are myriads of these tiny microbes — the Micrococcus Catarhatis. They only await a chance to attack when the throat is weakened or inflamed. Evans' Pastilles will work against these microbes.

The Bacillus Influenzae, which is responsible for all cases of Influenza. These illustrations are from actual microphotographs of the microbes magnified 940 diameters, taken at our Runcorn Bacteriological Laboratories.



The undoubted success which has attended the use of Evans' Pastilles has produced a good number of worthless substitutes. To

protect the public and to prevent substitution, we have re-introduced here the Pastille and Box for reference.



Each Pastille can be recognised by a raised bar marking and none are genuine without this mark.
"See the Raised Bar on each Pastille"

W.C.L.

Fog Coughs and Colds

The millions of tiny water particles which compose fogs, collect and hold the soot and dust of our cities and large towns.

The dampness of the fog lowers the vitality, and the soot, etc., irritates the delicate mucous lining of the throat; both conditions which lay the system open to microbe attacks.

You are constantly surrounded by myriads of microbes waiting for such opportunities. In foggy weather, or at any time when there is danger of infection, you will be able to neutralise any ill-effects if one or two Evans' Pastilles are allowed to dissolve in the mouth when Danger threatens.

EVANS' Pastilles

The effective precautionary measure against the microbes of influenza, Catarh, Pneumonia, Diphtheria, etc.

The unique antiseptic qualities possessed by Evans' Pastilles aid the natural resistance against all microbes which attack the mouth and throat. The Pastilles are made from a private formula, and they are free from poisonous alkaloids. They strengthen the vocal cords, allay and prevent irritation of the throat, and loosen any mucous secretions which may be present.

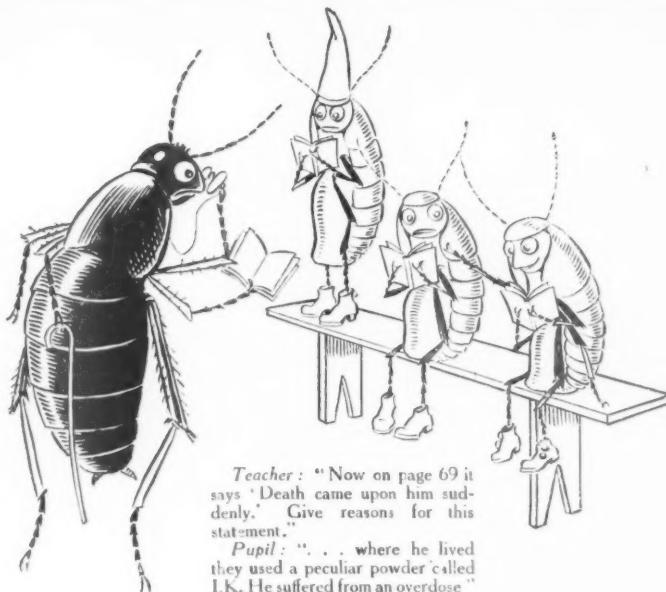
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Three Ladies Relate their Striking Experiences.

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